

PlayStation 3 PSN PSVita PSP 演劇端末

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# PLAY

ISSUE NO 214  
LET ME BE YOUR FANTASY

REVEALED

THE LAST OF US

Truth behind Uncharted's zombification

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PREVIEWS

BIOSHOCK INFINITE  
ALIENS: COLONIAL MARINES  
THE DARKNESS II  
WIPEOUT 2048  
RE: OPERATION RACCOON CITY

WORLD EXCLUSIVE REVIEW

# FINAL FANTASY XIII-2

DEFINITIVE VERDICT ON SQUARE ENIX'S EPIC RETURN

EXCLUSIVE

FUTURE OF PLAYSTATION

How much longer will PS3 live? Sony's shock confession

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ONE DESTINY.

**namco**

INTRODUCES

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How to watch the delicious high-definition content included free on your Play DVD...

### STEP ONE

Open DVD and navigate to *On the Play DVD-ROM*

### STEP TWO

Click where it says *Click here to open DVD-ROM folder*

### STEP THREE

Open the folder that says *HD Trailers*

### STEP FOUR

Just double-click the trailer you want to watch!



# INSTALL

Where fact + opinion ÷ PlayStation = the truth



## 10 GAMES THAT WILL BE

### 1 Resident Evil 6

**DEVELOPER** Capcom (TBC)  
**ANNOUNCEMENT** April/May  
It's coming. Possibly set in China. It will be better than *Operation Raccoon City*. But will it finally see the return of Barry Burton in a starring role? That much we don't know. And hopefully it will abandon the partner system of *Resident Evil 5*: we don't want another AI partner dragging us down.

### 2 Medal Of Honor 2

**DEVELOPER** Danger Close  
**ANNOUNCEMENT** March  
*Battlefield 3* included a flyer promoting MedalOfHonor.com, and Danger Close has already said it's working on a sequel – what more proof do you need? Hopefully this sequel will improve upon what was a fun, but stale, single-player experience while retaining the great multiplayer aspect.

### 3 Dragon Age III

**DEVELOPER** BioWare  
**ANNOUNCEMENT** May  
Once BioWare has *Mass Effect 3* out of the door in March, what will the main studio have to work on? A sequel to the rather divisive *Dragon Age II*, of course. We fully expect the third game in the series to be announced at some point during this year – but will it have multiplayer?

### 4 Assassin's Creed III

**DEVELOPER** Ubisoft  
**ANNOUNCEMENT** January  
Ubisoft doesn't look like it wants to miss its yearly release schedule for the *Assassin's Creed* series and we don't see 2012 being any different to be honest. Ezio is done, Altair is over – could the *proper* third game in the series be all about Desmond? We sincerely hope not.

### 5 Half-Life 3

**DEVELOPER** Valve  
**ANNOUNCEMENT** Summer  
The rumblings about this one have been ongoing for a few years now, and it's now got to the point where we no longer expect it to be *Half-Life 2: Episode 3*. No, it's now more likely that Valve will announce an all-out sequel, and we also wouldn't expect to see it released for a few years yet.



# Need To Know IMPORTANT GAMING NEWS YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS

## Bestselling indie game of 2011 on PSN is...

*Limbo!* Sony published the top ten-selling games that were self-published on PSN and *Limbo* finished top with *Castle Crashers* coming in second. Of Sony's titles, *PixelJunk Shooter 2* was the highest-selling of the past year followed by *Fat Princess* and *Flower*.



## Hideo Kojima talks about Metal Gear Solid 5

With *Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance* re-emerging, Hideo Kojima has been doing a lot of talking. As well as talking up *Revengeance*, he also revealed his initial ideas for *Metal Gear Solid 5* after work on *MGS 4* was finished, featuring The Boss and Cobra Unit at Normandy. Say what?



## Sorcery is alive, well and coming back

You might have forgotten about PS3-exclusive *Sorcery*, the wizardry game centred around the Move controller, but Sony hasn't. It's back after the studio decided to revamp how the game looked, rather than anything fundamental with the Move controls. Preview next issue!



# ANNOUNCED THIS YEAR

## 6 Fallout 4

**DEVELOPER** Bethesda  
**ANNOUNCEMENT** End of 2012  
Bethesda has *Skryim* done and dusted, and now a core team can continue to work on DLC. Other than that we have a group of talented individuals sitting on a *Fallout* licence that needs to be used. Can anyone else say 'announcement at the VGAs'? Just a thought.

## 7 New Quantic Dream project

**DEVELOPER** Quantic Dream  
**ANNOUNCEMENT** End of 2012  
'*Infraworld*? 'Horizon'? 'Fiv5'? There are a lot of names and concepts being thrown around for David Cage's next game, with the one constant being 'emotional storytelling'. Whatever it ends up being announced as we're sure it will at least be *interesting*.

## 8 Syphon Filter 4

**DEVELOPER** SCE Bend  
**ANNOUNCEMENT** February  
As far as our spies tell us, *Syphon Filter 4* will be announced *and* released during 2012 – they're not often wrong either. Developed by SCE London Studio (once thought to be Sony Bend), it will see a return to the world of shooting, espionage and Gabe Logan's superb name.

## 9 God Of War IV

**DEVELOPER** SCE SM  
**ANNOUNCEMENT** February  
Sony Santa Monica's call for an online dev to join its ranks has many thinking the inevitable *God Of War IV* will include online play. We could stop and ask why, but then we could also ask why there's another game when *GOW III* was meant to be Kratos's last outing. We're not complaining, though.

## 10 Just Cause 3

**DEVELOPER** Avalanche  
**ANNOUNCEMENT** April/May  
*Just Cause 2* is still at the forefront of one of our favourite videogame genres: the dick-about-'em-up. The inevitable third game in the series, which is rumoured to be getting a 2012 release – though we think 2013 is more likely – will have to step its game up to surpass its progenitor.



# INSTALL

## YOUR SHOUT

# BORDERLANDS 2

### 1. @D3J08

Madness, awaits, loads of co-op, hopefully zombies or sth... and then there's *Borderlands 2*

### 2. @HANKBIZZLE

*Borderlands* is one of my favourite games so for me all *Borderlands 2* needs to do is be the same with some new stuff to do :-)

### 3. @IBANGORBABE

Can't wait for *Borderlands 2*, I hope they allow us to build guns by collecting parts from the world, helix rocket shotgun FTW!

### 4. @THEHILLMONSTER

*Borderlands* I got to lvl 69 just wondering what kind of sexual lvl cap they'll have next?

### 5. @PAUL\_BOWLER

The first game was a lot of fun, hopefully *Borderlands 2* will be even bigger & better!

YOUTUBE.COM/  
PLAYMAGUK



I pre-ordered this six weeks ago. *Borderlands* was an amazing game and I bet this tops it.  
**AK4775**

Haha now I like it! The shooting mechanics seem to be more fun, and the gameplay more action-packed.

**MATHEUSRINALDI2**

facebook .com/playmagazineuk

**John Murray** Want. Simple as!

**Daniel 'Drake' Gough** Me no likey.

**Joe Riddell** The first one made me want to cut my thumbs off. Awful.

**Connor Garratt** One of the games of 2012 I am psyched for. Loved the first *Borderlands*, what can go wrong? A lot, but it probably won't.

**Jack King** Didn't spend a great deal of time with the first so I might give the second a try, will be interesting to see what's been changed.

**Lee Heather** Can't wait for *Borderlands 2*. The first one was amazing, and the second one will no doubt be just as awesome.

**Tom Watson** I finished the first one and really enjoyed it!

PLAY ONLINE

You can find us skiving/working/engaging with the community (delete as appropriate) at [Facebook.com/PlayMagazineUK](https://www.facebook.com/PlayMagazineUK), [@PlayMag\\_UK](https://www.youtube.com/playmaguk) and [youtube.com/playmaguk](https://www.youtube.com/playmaguk)



# INSTANT EXPERT

All of the pros with none of the prose

## DESCENT START

The new Deadly Descents look brilliant. There are nine overall, but here's a selection: Avalanche sees you riding away from a, well, you know, Gravity sees you wingsuiting down a mountain, and Darkness has players navigating the inside of a blacked-out mountain. Sweet.

## COMBO BREAKER

SSX might be more sober in its appearance than previous games, but there's still an insane amount of tricks, boosts and combo chains to figure out as you smash your way down the game's peaks. As long as we can still uber our way to terrifying, death-defying victory we're fine.

## RIDE ON TIME

Did you like *NFS's* Autolog system? You did? Well good, because SSX features its own spin on the concept with 'RiderNet'. It may sound like Nineties dude-speak, but we'll give it a chance if only because we have an obsessive compulsive need to check on our friends. Ahem.

## BACK FROM THE DEAD

Also returning from the previous games are much-loved cast members like Mac Fraser, Zoe Payne and Moby Jones. Which should make those people who invested in the series since 2000 very happy indeed, and everyone else mildly amused.

## TRICKIED OUT

Good news: Run-DMC's mega-popular song *It's Tricky*, which featured prominently in the second SSX game of nearly the same name, will return. Yay. Bad news: some other jokers are remixing it. Boo. Has the world gone crazy? Yes, of course it has. Now get back to your business.

## SKI SUNDAY

One thing that won't be returning is *SSX On Tour's* skiing sections. Yeah, they were alright, but it was a different time, and skiing isn't, has never been, and never will be cool. Just saying.

## CHECKING IT OUT

Previous SSX games were all about over-the-top stunts and even more over-the-top colour schemes and aesthetics. This new one mutes it a little, now rocking a cool steel-blue vibe, but that's not to say that the action has been dialled down to match. This is still SSX, fools.

## TAGGED OUT

EA's been spending a lot of its promotional campaign for SSX talking up the game's geotagged, real-world mountain ranges that it's cribbed from some of the most famous peaks in the world. And very nice they are, too.

# SSX

Developer EA Canada  
Publisher EA • ETA February 2012

## twitterwatch



@fourzerotwo

"@RKIEliteKnight Then I'll call in the team so that we can address it. Everyone is on call. I can literally walk to the studio from my place."

@PlayMag\_UK says: *Call Of Duty's* Rob Bowling explains why hacks won't bring down the game while the team is on holiday.

# DOS & DON'TS

Important lessons from Play this month



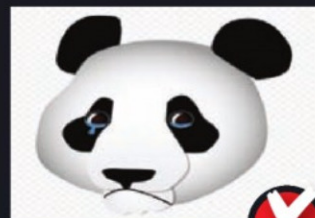
**DO:** Pre-order your Vita. Or, more importantly, go back in time and pre-order it, because you're probably out of luck now.



**DON'T:** Buy any games released in January (except maybe *UFC 3*). Most of them are rubbish, and February is packed with quality releases.



**DO:** Remember to download the brilliant NowGamer System Linked podcast, starring our very own Steve Burns.



**DON'T:** Listen to other videogaming podcasts, because they're all rubbish and that. Well, not all, but ours is awesome.

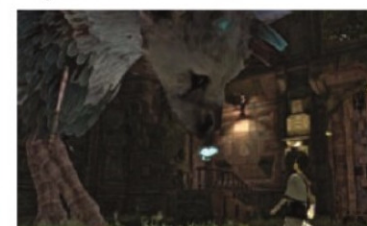
Read our reviews of all these games starting on page 75

## QUESTION WILL PS3 REALLY HAVE A TEN-YEAR LIFE CYCLE?

The launch of the PS3 was a strange time to be a gamer. It was also a great time to be an Xbox 360-loving internet trollster: HUR HUR, it costs too much. HUR HUR, the games are wack. HUR HUR, the controller is knob – wait, that one's true.



Things got better before they got worse of course as PS3 made a slow start. Doom and gloom was predicted for the company, Krazy Ken was moved upstairs, while Phil Harrison moved on. PlayStation was finished.



Except of course it wasn't (funny that). Now the PS3 is close to catching the Xbox 360's worldwide install base, having already outstripped it in Europe and Japan. The real question now is what the PlayStation does next: can it last for ten years?



Of course it can, but that doesn't mean it will be particularly relevant. After all the PSone and PS2 had ten-year life cycles, but a lot of that was spent in the shadow of successor consoles. It'll be the same for PS3 we reckon: with Nintendo launching a new console/thing next year and Microsoft gearing up to release the next generation of its shitty hardware Sony will be hard-pressed to sit on its hands on this one.



The company has already said that it wouldn't be ideal to launch too much later than the competition, but this isn't necessarily a bad thing. The PS3 is a monster of a console, and as soon as the new one is announced the price of the current unit will drop to about 5 Deutsch Marks. Then everyone will buy one, resulting in a larger install base resulting in many more brilliant games for years to come. Calm down, people.

Answer: Yes



# INSTALL

# BEHIND THE SCENES: UNCHARTED

## SPECIAL REPORT



Richard Lemarchand, co-lead game designer on the *Uncharted* series, talks Lara Croft, ad libbing and Cary Grant films

### Did you ever purposely set out to make a Lara Croft beater?

We didn't really think about *Uncharted* in those terms, no. We love the *Tomb Raider* games, and Lara is a very different kind of character from Nathan Drake. Nate works much more closely at the edge of his physical ability than many other videogame characters. He's much more likely to clumsily mess up a jump or stumble in the middle of a fight, and that worked well for the kind of stories we wanted to tell, and the kind of emotional connection between our players and our hero that we wanted to create. Ironically, we had to do a lot of extra animation work to portray a character that is flawed and fallible, but we think it really pays off.

### How difficult was it to get the balance between adventuring and proper third-person shooting?

It's one of the first things that we start thinking about, and one of the last things we finish fine-tuning. We work hard to make sure that our games don't feel 'modal' – in other words, we want to make sure that you, the player, never think to yourself, 'oh, okay, I'm in the climbing part of the game now, and now I'm in the shooting part.' We try to freely mix the various elements that the game is built from: exploration, climbing, problem-solving, puzzles and, of course, the gunplay and brawling combat, to create an experience that keeps the player caught up in the action and on the edge of their seat from moment to moment.

### Are many of you big history buffs?

Lots of us at Naughty Dog are big fans of history – and archaeology, anthropology, geography, architecture, painting, and many of the related arts and sciences! We even have a goal with the *Uncharted* games, in that we want them to pass what we call 'the Google test.' If you hear about something from the real world in one of our games, we want you to be able to Google it, and find out something that you didn't know before. That helps our game world be more believable, but maybe it also makes your day a bit more interesting!

### Are you a big fan of matinee cinema? What films helped shape *Uncharted*?

We are big fans! Our creative director, Amy Hennig, who is also the head writer of the *Uncharted* series, is a particular fan of that era of adventure writing, and did a lot of research in

the course of putting together the background for our world. I know that Amy grew up enjoying the Doc Savage stories – he was an evil-fighting tough-guy scientist, and one of the first great pulp heroes. Movies like Fritz Lang's *The Spiders* and the early Cary Grant film *Gunga Din* also had a big influence on our imagining of *Uncharted: Drake's Fortune*. Sharp-eyed fans will even notice little tributes to those movies in our games.

### Is Nathan Drake based on anyone in particular?

We looked at lots of different character art and discussed many different actors while we were designing the look of Nathan Drake, but at the end of the day he's the creation of our talented concept artists and character artists, with lots of directorial input from Amy and the other Naughty Dogs!

### Is it true he's based on Naughty Dog's co-founder Jason Rubin?

(laughs) No, I'm afraid I don't think that's true, even though it's a persistent internet rumour!

### The *Uncharted* series' voice acting is superb, how do you achieve this? Do you accept feedback from the actors? Can they ad lib?

Thank you for the compliment! Our talented actors work very hard to create performances for the *Uncharted* games and their work is a very important part of our games' success. It's important to realise that the same actors do both the voices and the physical performances for our characters. We capture their voices and movements at the same time, on our motion capture stage, and we use the video we shoot on the stage as reference for our talented animators, who create the facial animation you see in the game, as well as finessing the mo-capped animation. We put our actors in the same physical space for the scenes that they're in together – there's an old saying, that 'acting is reacting,' and so the only way we can get their best performances is if our actors can see each other while they're acting. As we're rehearsing the scenes, we encourage them to help shape the performances, and they often come up with really great ideas for ways of doing something, or for lines, that we end up including in the game. We even do a thing called 'chasing picture,' where we get them to ad lib over video of the gameplay, and some of the funniest, most relevant in-game dialogue comes from that process!





# Grand Theft Auto V

# RUMOURS AND SPECULATION

The latest rumours, speculation, thoughts and musings on Rockstar's next big thing

## ONE DISC ONLY?

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grand theft auto III

grand theft auto: Vice City

4.37GB

grand theft auto: San Andreas

4.21GB

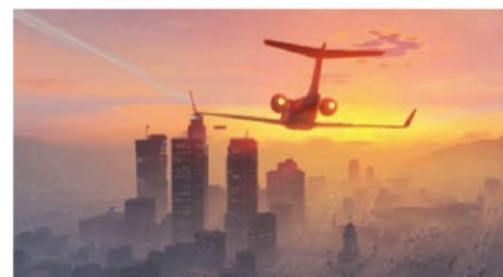
grand theft auto IV

10.51GB

The size of the PS2 GTA games was pushing capacity on a single-layer DVD, meaning reuse of assets and improved compression techniques actually *lowered* the size of data on *San Andreas*. Space isn't much of a concern on Blu-ray, and with a spare 15GB (35GB if using dual-layer) there's room for a lot of high-quality content. Better still, it will all be on one disc – none of this disc-swapping nonsense you might expect on other, lesser consoles.



## HOW ROCKSTAR TRICKED YOU



**T**he image on the right is from the GTA V trailer, released late 2011. The image above is from GTA IV, released in April 2008 – almost four years prior. KABOOM! That wasn't the sound of us punctuating a dramatic fact, there was an explosion nearby. Sorry about that. In any case, it turns out the newness of GTA V's trailer is something you've known about for almost four years. Rockstar tricked your weak mind!

If you want to check for yourself, you can find this sign of things to come near the first safehouse, plastered on the back of a

carousel in the area. Cross-referencing it with the trailer imagery, as we have, shows that very distinctive sunset, the infamous Vinewood sign, a cityscape and a Shamal aircraft flying away from the camera. Separately we could accept a coincidence. Together? We're pretty sure Rockstar has gone and pulled a fast one on the entire world, and something that even the combined might of the internet didn't discover until almost four years after the game originally came out.

Well played, Rockstar. Well played.

## THE SIZE OF GTA V'S 'BIG' MAP

**ACCORDING TO DAN** Houser, GTA V will have "a very big map" containing not just Los Santos, but the surrounding countryside, too. Then, of course, Rockstar has already said this will be the 'largest' GTA game yet. But how big is that? It seems logical to assume Los Santos won't be the only big city in the game.

Will the area the game is set in encapsulate just the one geographical region? Some are pointing to the mountains we've seen as a natural separator for desert regions and more

verdant areas. The fact GTA V takes place in Rockstar's version of California, which has features like this lends some credence to these thoughts.

We've been hearing from sources all over the place that the game will feature multiple playable characters, and the lack of a clearly defined main character in the original trailer backs this thinking up – then, of course, there's the fact GTA IV's DLC covered multiple characters. Testing the water, maybe?



● If you thought GTA IV was big, V is set to be the biggest GTA yet.





## TIME UP FOR DRAKE?

Naughty Dog won't abandon **Uncharted** for **The Last Of Us**



### THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF

Naughty Dog's new project *The Last Of Us* made a lot of PS3 fans very, very happy. As soon

as that slick trailer did the rounds at the VGAs – taking everybody's minds off of the terrible spectacle of, well, the VGAs – people were falling over themselves to proclaim it 'excellent', 'amazing' and 'the best game ever made by man or walrus.'

Some, however, were not so happy. 'What about *Uncharted*?' they squealed. 'Naughty Dog only works on a series for three games and then moves on!' shrieked another so hard that his half-tucked T-shirt threatened to return to a reasonable position.

'But what about the overall quality? Won't it be sacrificed by having the staff split between the two teams?' blared another joyless windbag, terrified by his own brain.

To this we say: worry not, *Uncharted* fans, because we don't think that the series has run its course on the PlayStation 3 just yet. Granted, Naughty Dog has previously adhered to the three-strikes-and-out rule: with *Crash Bandicoot* on PSone and *Jak And Daxter* for PlayStation 2.

*Uncharted*, however, is in a different league in terms of quality and sales from those two series. First, *Uncharted* makes both companies a lot of money. Buy-your-own-island money. There's no way Naughty Dog is going to just abandon this guaranteed revenue stream, and if it does then it's *mental*.

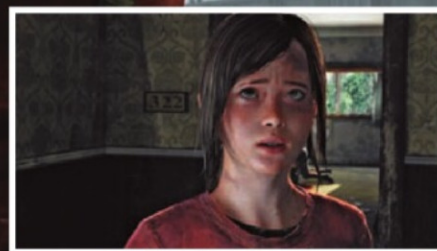
This doesn't look like it's going to happen, however, as Naughty Dog has previously stated, it's now a two-team studio. This is – contrary to reports from crazed fanboys the world over – a good thing.

Why? Many reasons. There'll be a friendly rivalry now in the office, with both teams vying for those all-important bragging rights. Naughty Dog will deny it if asked, of course, but that competition is built-in.

There's also the fact that with two projects in-house, staff can easily be switched between games to prevent project or franchise fatigue. You may love *Uncharted*, but try living it: it'll catch up with you in the end.

Most importantly, though, it gives the company a new outlet to craft different gameplay experiences. Experiences that can then be learnt from, with that experience going back into the *Uncharted* series to freshen things up.

Which, again, is A Good Thing.



“Don't worry, Ellen Page. It's going to be fine.”



“Expect this series to simply disappear? Have you gone mental?”

## THE LAST OF US

Naughty Dog has never truly let us down. It doesn't look like starting here.





# HIDEO KOJIMA'S NEW GAME – SCREENS!

Games industry sorcerer Hideo Kojima isn't just busy throwing Phoenix Downs on his own games, as seen with his revival of *Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance*. No, he sometimes makes his own games, too. And now we have screens! Straight from the sorcerer himself!

These are taken from 'Project Ogre', which is what Kojima was working

on before he got caught up in the *Revengeance* chaos. There's not much else to be said for these screenshots. The important info is 1) they're running on Fox Engine, 2) you can see their bras haha teehee, and 3) something else, probably to do with how it might look like *Metal Gear Solid 5* but it isn't *Metal Gear Solid 5* because Hideo Kojima would have said this was *Metal*

*Gear Solid 5* if this was *Metal Gear Solid 5*.

Anything else at this point is conjecture. No one outside of Kojima Productions knows anything about Project Ogre. We'd wager even Kojima has days where he forgets what this is supposed to be about. Do you remember the plot for *Metal Gear Solid 2*? Exactly.

**STAT ATTACK**  
324,859  
PS Vita's week one sales in Japan

## TOP 5 SAINTS ROW GRIEFING MANOEUVRES

How to irritate your co-op partner to pieces



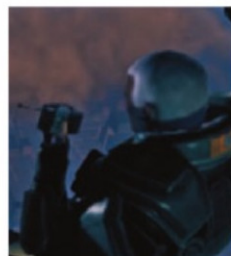
### 'TOP GUN'

Simple, but effective. Grab an airborne vehicle and fly to the very top of the map, then simply jump out. Make sure your partner isn't wearing a parachute and you've got a lifetime of sassy PSN messages to look forward to.



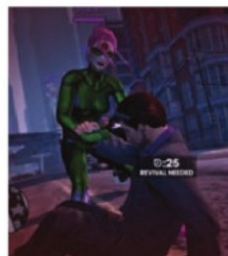
### 'ON-MESSAGE'

Another one guaranteed to enrage the other player... to death. Keep spamming them PSN messages. When they tire of this and call you names, simply respond telling them to focus on the game and not messages.



### 'THE WAY IT'S MEANT TO BE PLAYED'

No one expects this. Tell your partner you want to play the game for the... missions, maybe? 'NO', they will cry. 'You fool, we want to smash something up, now. We don't have time to words.'



### 'COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWN'

PS3 doesn't come with a headset, because PS3's initial network strategy was wack. So chances are that you haven't got a headset and neither has your partner. Get one and talk to them. They won't be impressed.



### 'CO-OP COP OUT'

This one's easy: simply join a co-op game on Daedalus, and repeatedly jump off of the side. Do it near the end of a wave for special bonus points. Combine it with the headset and the messages for upgraded effect.

## PLAY Charts

Cataloguing everything that's big in the world of PlayStation

### PS3 CHART

- FIFA 12**  
EA Sports  
The holiday period was a time for playing games, so lots of you decided to play the best footy game on PS3.
- Battlefield 3**  
EA  
Bolstered by the release of *Back To Karkand*, DICE's shooter leapfrogs IW's baby in the charts.
- Modern Warfare 3**  
Activision  
Still just as popular as you'd expect from something often referred to as 'popular'.
- Skyrim**  
Bethesda  
As *Retro Gamer*'s Darran Jones said: "I a zoo druk." That's nothing to do with *Skyrim*, but it's brilliant.
- Assassin's Creed: Revelations**  
Ubisoft  
It's utterly compulsive, but the new additions are garbage. We're so confused by it.
- Need For Speed: The Run**  
EA  
A return to form for the *Need For Speed* series, *The Run* is short but clearly popular among fans.
- Saints Row: The Third**  
THQ  
If Volition's masterclass in pistaking joy manages to stay in the charts we can finally rest easy.
- Uncharted 3**  
Sony  
Drake's still hanging around like that mass murderer who just won't go away – there's one at every party.
- WWE '12**  
THQ  
We keep thinking Yuke's may do something different for *WWE '13*. Then we start laughing and don't stop.
- Rayman Origins**  
Ubisoft  
Finally making its presence felt thanks to some swift, massive price-cuts.

### PSVITA CHART

- Uncharted: Golden Abyss**  
Sony  
The reason to own a Vita, and seemingly the main reason people in Japan have snapped up a Vita.
- Everybody's Golf**  
Sony  
There are certain people on *Play* who are unimaginably happy that Vita launched in Japan with a new EG title.
- Dynasty Warriors Next**  
Tecmo Koei  
Never underestimate the popularity of half-fake history games where you hammer buttons a lot.
- Lord Of Apocalypse**  
Square Enix  
The only launch Vita game that sold enough and isn't a spin-off. Oh god no *Lord Of Arcana* exists.
- Ridge Racer**  
Namco Bandai  
A low entry price point for the launch *Ridge Racer* game hasn't helped it to the top like we might have expected.

\*This chart is compiled from sales, our opinions and the games you're playing. If you're playing a recent, quality title that isn't on our chart, head on over to the forum and let us know about it.



# INSTALL

## BATTLEFIELD 3'S TINY FEET AND MASSIVE HEADS



1. Army men have many large things.



2. Large jeeps.



3. Large guns.



4. Gigantic heads. Or tiny feet.

## JUST RELEASED



### METAL GEAR SOLID HD COLLECTION

February sees the release of a fair few big-name games, for no discernible reason (not that we're complaining). One of them is this package of three games – two excellent, one certainly worth playing – rejigged into high definition and released at a wallet-friendly price. If you've never got into the *Metal Gear Solid* series before, this could work out as a good starting point, even if you do miss out on the first and fourth games. If you have played them, you might have already imported this from the US following its November release. If not, buy it now.

**THE BIG RELEASE**

**22 FEBRUARY**

## PLAYSTATION VITA

The month of February is dominated by some big releases, but it would be stupid to point at anything in cooing delight as much as we do Sony's new entry to the handheld market. A beautiful OLED touch screen, a combination of input methods that could change (or just gimmickify) games on the machine, two thumbsticks – it does matter – and a host of other features make for a handheld that has it all. Will Vita be a success? We hope so, naturally, but there's no way to be certain – especially since the PSP, on selling 60 million-plus units, is still seen as a failure by many.

## RELEASELIST

Time to get those wallets out again as 2012's gaming avalanche begins

### FEBRUARY

PlayStation Vita  
 Ultimate Marvel Vs Capcom 3  
 Uncharted: Golden Abyss  
 Ridge Racer  
 Shinobido 2: Tales Of The Ninja  
 Touch My Katamari  
 Escape Plan  
 Gravity Rush  
 Everybody's Golf  
 Hustle Kings  
 Little Deviants  
 MotorStorm RC  
 ModNation Racers: Road Trip  
 Reality Fighters  
 Unit 13  
 Super Stardust Delta  
 Top Darts  
 Wipeout 2048  
 F1 2011  
 SoulCalibur V  
 Final Fantasy XIII-2  
 Metal Gear Solid HD Collection  
 UFC Undisputed 3  
 The Darkness II

### Inversion

Kingdoms Of Amalur: Reckoning  
 Binary Domain  
 SSX  
 Twisted Metal  
 Asura's Wrath  
 Syndicate  
 Catherine  
 NeverDead  
 Zone Of The Enders HD Collection  
 Captain Morgane And The Golden Turtle  
 Combat Wings: The Great  
 Battles Of World War II

### MARCH

Max Payne 3  
 Aliens: Colonial Marines  
 Ghost Recon: Future Soldier  
 Mass Effect 3  
 Lollipop Chainsaw  
 Ridge Racer Unbounded  
 Dragon's Dogma  
 Street Fighter X Tekken  
 Resident Evil: Operation Raccoon City  
 Sniper: Ghost Warrior 2  
 The Testament Of Sherlock Holmes

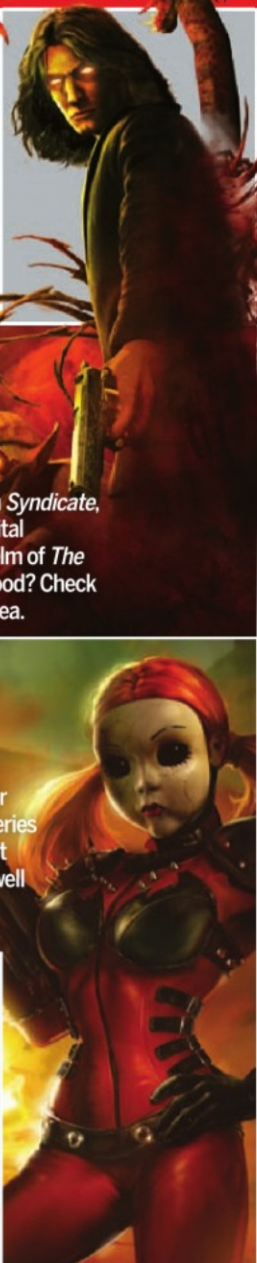
### REST OF 2012

London 2012: The Official Video  
 Game Of The Olympic Games  
 Assassin's Creed III  
 Borderlands 2  
 Metro: Last Light  
 Hitman: Absolution  
 Blades Of Time  
 Devil's Third  
 Dragon's Crown  
 Darksiders II  
 Dishonored  
 Prey 2  
 Ninja Gaiden 3  
 Prototype 2  
 XCOM  
 DmC  
 BioShock Infinite  
 Far Cry 3  
 Tekken Tag Tournament 2  
 Armored Core 5  
 Counter Strike: Global Offensive  
 Metal Gear Solid: Rising  
 Brothers In Arms: Furious 4  
 Port Royale 3



# FORWARD PLANNER FEBRUARY 2012

"Who've Man Utd got in the Champions League this month?" - Dan Peel

| SUNDAY                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | MONDAY                                                                             | TUESDAY                                                                                                                                                                                                     | WEDNESDAY                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | THURSDAY                                                                                                                                                         | FRIDAY                                                                                                                                                                       | SATURDAY                                                                              |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>03</b><br><b>SOULCALIBUR V</b><br>We've actually had this in the office for a few months now, which is a good thing as it means we're already really good at it before you, the public, get your hands on it. See you online! |  | <b>03</b><br><b>NEVERDEAD</b><br>Could Rebellion do it? Could the studio that gave us the Ultimate Turd in <i>Rogue Warrior</i> hit back with a game we actually enjoy? From what we've seen, it's a maybe. | <b>03</b><br><b>THE DARKNESS II</b><br>While Starbreeze works on <i>Syndicate</i> , out later in the month, Digital Extremes has taken the helm of <i>The Darkness II</i> . But is it any good? Check our preview to get some idea. | <b>10</b><br><b>PLAY 215</b><br>Get over your post-Valentine's Day blues with the latest <i>Play</i> issue. Two hundred and 15 issues... that's a lot of issues. | <b>17</b><br><b>SYNDICATE</b><br>Rounding out the releases for this massive month is the one we're not entirely convinced by. That trailer was awesome, though.              |   |
| <b>12</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>13</b>                                                                          | <b>03</b><br><b>FINAL FANTASY XIII-2</b><br>This is really just to point out when it's coming out - you should turn to page 76 for our massive, exclusive review.                                           | <b>15</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <b>16</b>                                                                                                                                                        | <b>17</b><br><b>TWISTED METAL</b><br>Extra development time for David Jaffe's cult classic series means our disappointment with earlier versions may well turn into delight. |  |
| <b>19</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>20</b>                                                                          | <b>21</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>22</b><br><b>PSVITA</b><br>Haven't you heard about this? It's a technological beast from the future sent to make handheld gaming worthwhile again.                                                                               |                                                                               | <b>24</b><br><b>SYNDICATE</b><br>Rounding out the releases for this massive month is the one we're not entirely convinced by. That trailer was awesome, though.              |  |
| <b>29</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                       |

## PSN HEAT BAR!

### ONLINE PASS EXPIRY DATES

We knew they existed, but it slipped our minds about the likes of *Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit*. Buy it new today, the included code won't work. You can get a replacement from EA, but it's still ridiculous.

### AWESOMENAUTS

On one hand it looks pretty cool. On the other hand it's called *Awesomenauts*, which reminds us of *Psychonauts*, which reminds us there's unlikely to be a sequel to that - which makes us sad.

### PAPA & YO

This PSN exclusive stars a small boy who is helped through the world by a small robot companion. For a crude comparison, picture *Ico* spliced with *Where The Wild Things Are*.

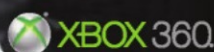
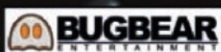
### BLACK KNIGHT SWORD

A unique and interesting - and dark - tale told through Grasshopper Manufacture, *Black Knight Sword* looks to be one of those games you can only find through PSN. That's good, by the way.





# DRIVE, DESTROY, DOMINATE





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## 5 POPULAR FRANCHISES THAT DIED OFF

Maintaining a hit franchise is a tricky business. While it might seem easy – pump out games every year, watch the profit roll in – Activision will be the first to tell you that strategy is inherently flawed. Here's five popular franchises that couldn't sustain themselves

### 1 GUITAR HERO

Probably the most famous example of a publisher milking a series until the public couldn't take it any more, *Guitar Hero* went from true pop culture phenomenon to the scrapheap in five years. Maybe Activision shouldn't have released a new entry every 42 seconds, eh?



### 2 TONY HAWK'S SKATEBOARDING

Once the undisputed king of extreme sports, the *Tony Hawk* series was a guaranteed cash cow for Activision (again). Too many sequels, however, coupled with the rise of *Skate* saw the series peter out in spectacular fashion. The originals will be back in HD but do you still care?

### 4 PARAPPA THE RAPPER

The rhythm action sensation before people even knew what it meant, *PaRappa* is a fondly remembered, absolutely crazy PSone game that sadly will probably never make the leap back onto the big stage, let alone the public consciousness.



#### twitterwatch



@PG\_Kamiya

"Cuz PG didn't have enough staff to do that. Our mistake. RT @Srdjanman: Why did Sega do the *Bayonetta* port to PS3?"

@PlayMag\_UK says: *Bayonetta*'s producer all but admits that the PS3 version was a bit pump. For what it's worth, you should follow him for sheer entertainment value. Watch him slap down tweets with answers like "no" and "whatever".



### 5 THE GETAWAY

Sony London's hyped to the nines *GTA* killer actually turned out to be long on ambition and short on actual quality. Sure, the portrayal of London was staggeringly good, but the controls were crap, the shooting was rubbish and the health system was infuriating. A sequel followed but it wasn't enough.



### 3 CRASH BANDICOOT

In the Nineties, every hardware manufacturer had to have a cutesy mascot, preferably from a platform game, for idiots and children to argue over. Sega had Sonic, Nintendo had Mario, and Sony had, er, Crash Bandicoot. Come PS2 era, however, and the developer had dropped this for Jak and Daxter.

## TEAM PICKS

The dead series we miss most



#### TOSHINDEN

Getting the demo of this on Christmas morning 1996 was the funniest moment of my life, thanks to the ridiculous voices. The combat itself was also pretty funny, but not in a good way.



#### TOTAL NBA

A good series that's now defunct, *Total NBA* used to be my b-ball sim of choice. I was upset, but now I've got *NBA 2K12* I'm happy again. Nothing like crushing my boy Hoppo at a game of b-ball.



#### GOOD SMACKDOWN GAMES

Not technically dead, just on life support and ready to have the plug pulled. I'd rather write about *Chop Chop Master Onion*. Leave me alone.



#### WILD ARMS

I got this game in Spanish (because I lived in Spain at the time, not because I'm weird), got about four hours into it, came to a desert puzzle and couldn't work out what to do next. Sigh.



The anatomy of...

# MAX PAYNE

Max Payne shot, dove and exploded his way onto the videogame scene way back in 2001, before many of you were born. He's got a new game right around the corner, so let's break him down and see what makes him tick... tick... boom (sorry)

## BE(ARD) RIGHT BACK

Max Payne started the series as a good cop with a good life: a good father with a loving wife. Things went sideways, however, when his family got shot up faster than Alex Murphy in a version of *RoboCop* being watched at 30x fast-forward, and since then he's got a little bit grouchy.

In the original two games, developer Remedy showed Max's emotions by giving him a shit-eating grin and a Hawaiian shirt: in short, the game wasn't meant to be totally serious. Or even halfway serious. Sadly Rockstar has decided that the only way to represent this pain is to do what all games developers do when they need to show stress: give characters beards. Great stuff.

## GET YOUR GUN OFF

When the series started, bullet time was hitting its peak. *The Matrix* had come out and convinced everyone that leather and slow motion was the key to a successful movie, and the sequels were still being worked on by two guys who really didn't have a clue what they were doing.

As such Payne's use of aerial acrobatics was novel and fun. Then, like the movies, every game started doing it and wearing out the concept. Still: no series does bullet ballet better than Max, so there's still hope.

## GUT CHECK

As with most of *Play* magazine Max Payne's got a bit of a gut on. Again this is meant to show him in decline, driven half-mad from grief and reliant on booze. But really it just makes us think that he's become too lazy to go to the gym, and the real question is this: if Max Payne spends so much time running and jumping around, then how come Max Payne has a beer belly. Answer us that, Rockstar.

## UNDER A KILLING MOON

With Max branching out from shooting scum in New York to shooting scum in New York and Rio, we're wondering if Max's debilitating addiction to painkillers might be replaced with something else. Like samba, maybe, or the Rio carnival. Yes, that's it: in the new *Max Payne*, Max has become addicted to street parties and beach football. Ahem.

# THE MANY FACES OF MAX PAYNE

Mad Max is known for his many varied facial expressions, but for the uninitiated let's go over them again.



### MENTAL STATE: ANGRY

Max's default state, anger is what drives the man to commit the many, many murders he's been involved with over the course of two whole rampages. If you see Max Payne approaching you with this look on his face then the chances are you're already dead.



### MENTAL STATE: CALM

And here's how Max looks when he's at peace with the world. You'll notice the more relaxed eyes, the smiling mouth, the calmer hairstyle. If you were to run into Max Payne with this look on his face then relax. You're going to be fine. He's not going to drill you in the chest. And then with his gun.



### MENTAL STATE: CONFUSED

To be fair to Max, we would be confused too if we were him. Why are we in a videogame that thinks it's a movie but is told in comic-book panels? Is this meant to be serious or not? No one *really* thinks this dialogue is for reals, do they? And why are we wearing a Hawaiian shirt? You tell us.



### MENTAL STATE: SEQUEL

Now that Max Payne is in a next-generation sequel, that tatty old shirt/leather jacket combo isn't going to cut it any more. Time for Max to get himself down to his local Primark to pick up some brand-new threads. Luckily they'll be cheap so he can replace his many blood-stained coats.





# INSTALL

# PLAY

NOW Gamer NETWORK

## Keep connected to Play

All the ways you can keep up to date with the Play team

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### Play-Mag.co.uk

Opinion, analysis and hilarity can be found on our website [www.play-mag.co.uk](http://www.play-mag.co.uk) so join the debate, tell us why we're wrong and make us cry a bit



### Forum

Got something to talk about? Tell us on our forum: [www.play-mag.co.uk/forum](http://www.play-mag.co.uk/forum)

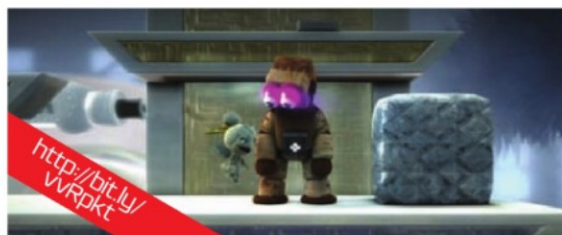


### Podcast

The Play team talks games every month  
[www.play-mag.co.uk/category/podcasts](http://www.play-mag.co.uk/category/podcasts)

Go to [www.Play-Mag.co.uk](http://www.Play-Mag.co.uk) for daily updates and features

## 6 GAMES WORTH BUYING PS3 FOR



### LITTLEBIGPLANET 2

In the year since *LBP 2* came out we've seen people make thousands more levels; we've seen them make *Pong*; we've seen them make *Metal Gear Solid*; we've seen them make actual, proper, working first-person shooters – we've seen all of this in a cute little platform game. *LBP 2* is, frankly, ridiculous.

### YAKUZA: DEAD SOULS

*Shenmue* is dead. *Yakuza* isn't *Shenmue*, but it's as close as you're going to get until *Shenmue III* comes out (hahahahahahaaaaaa never going to happen). It's an odd game, when we think about it, but it's as close to truly unique as you're likely to get in videogames. And it's capable of entirely taking over your time if you let it.

### DC UNIVERSE ONLINE

When it cost money it was good – since it's gone free to play it's near essential. The superhero-based MMO is no more than a (massive) download away and you can enter the world of running around, half-paying attention and sinking in more time than is really healthy. Plus it's one of the only MMORPGs available on PlayStation 3.

### INFAMOUS 2

This one gets rather unfairly overlooked by a lot of people. The original game was great fun, the second one is that bit better – with added user-generated content to boot, plus *inFamous 2* is home to the finest, smoothest, movement system in any game we know of – yes, including *Assassin's Creed*.



### RESISTANCE 3

We were dismissive of this one – the first game was interesting; the second game we almost immediately forgot. Surely the third one would be pump? Apparently Insomniac decided to act on feedback. The best game of the trilogy and a fantastic exclusive for PS3.

### UNCHARTED 3: DRAKE'S DECEPTION

Here's the most obvious entry. You've got Nathan Drake, one of the best main characters in gaming, and a supporting cast you'll actually care about. You'll encounter some of the most technically proficient storytelling on the PS3.

## REALISM IS KILLING OUR IMAGINATION

*Uncharted 3*, *L.A. Noire*, *Metal Gear Solid* – they all try to be movies. You're shown all of everything – you know what to think about a scene, about a level, a case, a boss, whatever, because you're given it in such explicit detail. My point? Well I'm wondering if we've lost the magic. Games look better? Good. That's great. I like that. I may be way off with the point, but think about it – what do you get in your head when you think about, say, *Gran Turismo 5*? Is it the insane detail in the stitching of the seat fabric, or is it the fact that the standard cars looked a bit bum compared to the premium ones? Now think about the original *Gran Turismo*. What do you see? I see lifelike replays, with cars that looked phenomenal and thick, billowing clouds of dust that was so thick – so real – it could clog up your lungs just by playing the game. My mind has entirely fabricated this latter point but in doing so, it's made the experience more special, more real to me. In the pursuit of making things look like Real Life, games are losing their special place in real life.

<http://bit.ly/sQpmd5>

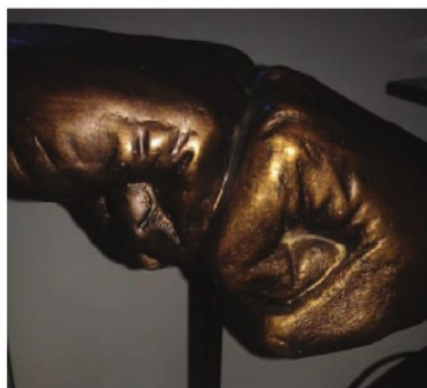




# facebook

www.facebook.com/PlayMagazineUK

## Things you may have missed on our Facebook page



### FIGHT CLUB CHAMPION

Play came to Namco X Capcom Fight Club, Play saw a 32-man tournament of fellow industry members, Play conquered all in a 32-man knockout tournament, Play won this trophy.



### NEED A HAND?

We were sent this *All Zombies Must Die!* hand, which now lies on Ryan's desk. We don't really know what you do with a hand. Please note: scratching yourself with another man's hand just feels weird.

## PLAY DISCUSSION:

**PLAY:** It's been a great year for gaming – maybe one of the best – but what's been the biggest disappointment for you these past 12 months?

**ADAM FRANKLIN:** *Duke* for one... but *Battlefield 3* did disappoint a wee bit.

**MATT THYS SMIDT:** *Uncharted 3*.

**GEORG STROHMAYER:** Normally I'd say *Rage*, but I didn't expect this to be good to begin with... so yeah probably the *Duke Nukem Forever* was the worst of 2012.

**LEE SNELLING:** Not really got many new games this year.

**SEB AYCOCK:** *Battlefield 3*'s single-player mode.

**JOHN MURRAY:** *Duke Nukem*.

**WILL WOOD:** *Dead Island* looked a great game by the trailer. Thought it would be like *Walking Dead* but when you got the finished version it was buggy as hell. Well let down by it.

**TONY WATSON SKELTON:** *Rage* without question. I knew *Duke Nukem*

*Forever* would be a bit nob anyway. It was just okay back in the Nineties and only stood out cos of a few cool ideas but *Rage* had the pedigree to make it superb. What we got has shown that old developers STILL need educating on how to make a new game.

**ANNE MARIE COYLE:** *Duke Nukem Forever*, after 14 years of teasing what an anticlimax :-/

**MICHAEL JORDAN:** *Duke Nukem Forever: BALLS OF STEEL EDITION*, even worse I bought one. Major bad disappointment for myself.

**LOUISA FOORD:** Losing my job so I couldn't afford to get all the games when I wanted!!!!!!

**JACK KING:** PSN hack.

**BOABY WILSON:** *Dead Island* was a bit of an anti-climax. In fact, it sucked. Hard.

**NATHAN JOHNSON:** *Bodycount* or *Brink* anyone?

**MAX GARBUS:** Boobs. Or maybe *Star Wars Battlefront 3*. Either, to be honest.

# You Tube

www.youtube.com/PlayMagUK

## Things you may have missed on our YouTube page



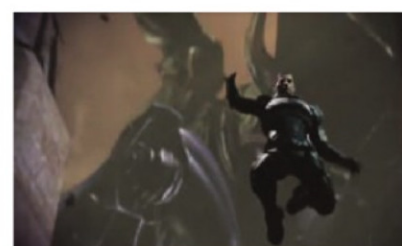
### METAL GEAR RISING: REVENGEANCE TRAILER



### A.M.Y. ENEMIES TRAILER



### YAKUZA: DEAD SOULS TRAILER



### MASS EFFECT 3 AGAINST ALL ODDS TRAILER



### RAINBOW SIX PATRIOTS TRAILER



### DMC STAGE FIGHT TRAILER

# twitter

www.twitter.com/PlayMag\_UK

## What have you been saying to us on Twitter?

**@PLAYMAG\_UK** What will be the big game for you next year? What do you want to see from PlayStation 3?

**@GARETHPBARRY** Tuff one! *The Last Of Us*, *Starhawk*, *Mass Effect 3*, *GTA V*, *Halo 4* are my top five. Too hard to pick one!

**@\_THECAZ** *BioShock Infinite*. Really can't wait for it to land and I can tell it'll be my Game of the Year for 2012 already.

**@XPERIAHUSKY** I have no idea. Might be a good year to catch up on my game backlog.

**@RM4RML** For me, being an old fart, it's *FFXIII-2* and *FFX-HD*. I have the reaction times of a tired sloth, so ATB etc are perfect for me.

**@NIRVANAFANWICKS** *Hitman* looks amazing.

**@BOLDY1991** Really looking forward to playing *Uncharted* on the PS Vita.

**@FRANKIEADZ** I want to see the Sky Player coming to the PS3... and about the games side... *BioShock Infinite* for me :)

**@FKING\_ZACKERY** I'd like a game where you play a hippo lounging in a pool

just flicking your ears every so often...

**@KITTLE11** *Skyrim* DLC. But I'm looking forward to *The Last Of Us*, it looks like a great opportunity for Naughty Dog to tell a post-apocalyptic story.

**@HANKBIZZLE** *Aliens: Colonial Marines* is my PS3 game for 2012. But really 2012 is all about the Vita for me, really can't wait!

**@CHRIS1\_9\_80** I really want another *Fallout* game using the *Skyrim* engine but with no lag please Bethesda. I'll even game test it for you FREE.

**@PLAYMAG\_UK** What do you think Sony will do with Move next year? Best/weirdest/smarest/tweetiest tweets will make the mag.

**@REALWORLDSCHAMP** Sorry but it's unprintable.

**@THETRIEBEBRAND** Make *Fight Night* fully compatible and make *Dead Island* Move compatible! Would be awesome!

**@CHIMERALEAGUE3** If they release the *Resident Evil* *Chronicles* series the magnum and knife set will be awesome.

**@DAYTRIPPER80** Decorating sim with wallpaper paste DLC.



# RE:PLAY

Listen, it's really very simple: you write words, you get games. Has anything ever been that simple? Maybe predicting Call Of Duty's first week chart position

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## KEEPING IT REAL

What's the **Play** team's stance on taking competitive play into the real world when friends are round? I reckon it's fine when kicking arse in *Street Fighter* to also give your mate a nudge or a shove if it gets you the win. My sneaky tactic of choice is to stand in front of them so they can't see the TV. However, this comes with the risk of getting a kick up the arse so should only be used in case of emergency or when your opponent's getting a bit too uppity.

What do you guys think?

**Gordon Mclean, via email**

**You've come to the right place for advice, Gordon, as **Play** is run by one Ryan King, who recently won an industry fighting championship featuring the cream of the national videogaming press.**

As such we're well placed to answer your question, and it all boils down to the **Play** philosophy, which is this: Violence isn't the answer. Violence is the question, and the answer is Yes.

## CAMPERS DELIGHT

I'm unaware if you have previously been contacted on this matter, but it is an openly talked about topic on forums. I am referring to 'camping' on *Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 3*. Obviously camping is done on all games in the *Call Of Duty* series but me and several others are trying to put a stop to all camping (in a tongue in cheek way).

Our first step to combat camping was the creation of our PSN account 'Camper\_Killers8'. This was simply created to find and kill people camping online. The creation of a new account allowed us to focus less on our stats and more on the completion of our goal. After receiving positive feedback from several PlayStation gamers we decided to create a Twitter account – @Camper\_Killer. On this account we name and shame campers we find during games.

This letter isn't being sent to you with the idea that we hope to win a game or a prize but more of getting your feedback and opinions on what we are doing. What are your views on campers and what do you think Infinity Ward/Sledgehammer Games could do to combat gamers who use camping as a gaming method?

**Darryl Bold & Marc Dallimore, via email**

At first we thought this email was a joke, but then we remembered that *Call Of Duty* is Serious Business. With that in mind then, we applaud your dedication to rooting out players who use the game's mechanics to their advantage. Why should players be allowed to get away with such heinous acts of Playing A Game In The Way They Want That Is Allowed And Even Encouraged By The Established Ruleset? That's right, they can't. And that is why, Mr Bold and Mr Dallimore, we admire your vigilante efforts. Bravo.

## LAUGH AND GROW

Since day one of PlayStation's release (original, not the PS3) I've played the PS franchise to death, and I'm going to play it for a lot longer.

There was one time that the original Xbox came out and I traded my PS2 in for it. Three days later, the thing breaks! That was my lesson learned, I went out a few weeks later and picked up the new slimline PS2 that came out.

You could go on and on about exclusives, controllers, interface or what sounds better but



**THE BURNING ISSUES**

**The stuff we want to hear about!**

- 1 **Skyrim: is it broken for you, too?**
- 2 **What games did you score this Xmas?**
- 3 **Why is Ian so angry all the time?**





Write in, and win! Every full-length letter we print receives a free Blu-ray™. For each letter we included this month, the sender wins a copy of First Squad on Blu-ray™. First Squad is out on Blu-ray™ and DVD now courtesy of Sony Pictures Home Entertainment (£22.99)

really you all need to just cop on and stop arguing about what YOU FEEL is the better console.

We all play games, yes? We all have the same interests? Then why the hell do these immature console wars break out ALL THE F\*\*KING TIME?? Who cares which is better? If you like the console you're using, fine. But there's no need to start dumping on the console someone else likes.

I love my PS3, I'll stay with it till the franchise dies out but you won't catch me down-talking the Xbox's flaws. Xbox has flaws, PS3 has flaws, PC has flaws. Nothing is perfect

Cal Nash, via email

**While we agree with the sentiment of this letter, we can't agree outright because, and this may sound childish, the so-called console wars are an amazing source of comedy. Do you remember the anguish that engulfed the internet when Final Fantasy XIII went multiplatform? Or the arguments about multiple discs versus installs?**

**Absolute comedy gold, we're sure you'll agree. The key is to only observe these scuffles and not to get involved. You can't stop them, after all, so just enjoy them for what they are: kids arguing.**

## SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT



As a reader of your magazine, I was a bit disappointed with the reviews I read. Not 'I must hunt and kill you all for not sharing my opinion' disappointed, just 'let down' disappointed. My reasons are that your reviews just seemed more like comparisons than reviews.

I'll go back a little further. With more and more reviews I see, the more I can tell the difference between a good quality, in-depth review and an opinionated, biased rub-off. These range from the slight mistake to the completely ignorant. I've seen half of a game reviewed, two games ranked against each other for the whole review in a large comparison and overall some completely unfair scores.

I won't bring up other websites or magazines but in relation to you specifically, **Play**, I see pieces of this in your reviews. *Modern Warfare* scored

so high despite you not once bringing up the repeated engine and gameplay style, like you did to *Assassin's Creed Revelations*, which made you mark it off quite a bit. *Battlefield's* story was compared to other games, and *Uncharted 3's* multiplayer was barely mentioned. I've trusted in you before to make purchases but how can I keep doing so when your reviews aren't consistent? Why was *Rayman Origins* given an 80% despite being very good with few flaws? Why does *Sonic 06* have a higher score than *Sonic Unleashed* when *06* is universally recognised as the worst *Sonic* game and you yourselves said at least *Unleashed* was half fun?

These issues and errors are being repeated more and more by more and more reviewers, with some going down to straight-up fanboyism (no lie). Please stay a balanced and fair magazine that takes an entire game into account when reviewing it and keep your standards in check.

Jack Mowat, via email

**Thanks for your letter, Jack. First, Play marked Modern Warfare 3 as it did despite familiar elements because those mechanics, while they may be somewhat tiring, are still fundamentally solid and capable of delivering on their original design goal, making it easy to enjoy the action, which we consider to be rather good. With Assassin's Creed, however, said design elements are now noticeably creaking: not out of familiarity, but because they don't always work as they are**

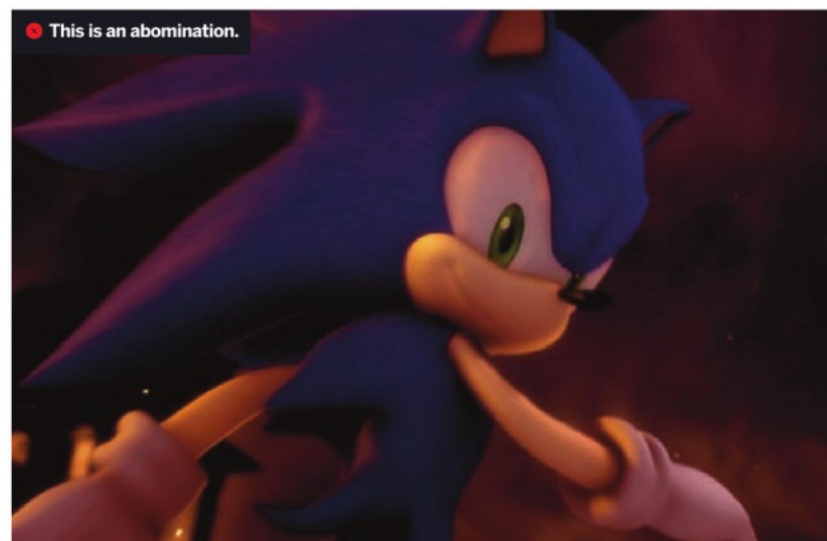
**intended and display a series of inconsistencies that frustrate. Hence the difference in scores (although this wasn't the only reason, of course).**

**With Battlefield, it was important to compare and contrast with other games because a) it was heavily influenced by Black Ops (hardly a great inspiration) and b) single-player is absolutely terrible.**

**As for Uncharted 3, we covered it by paying more attention to the element of the game we considered to be most important, much like with Battlefield 3. As for Rayman, is 80% not a good score? No, it's a fantastic score, but too many naff games have been scored on the old 7-10 scale in various outlets, artificially inflating everything and meaning that anything below 90% is seen as bad. Note only Batman: Arkham City and Skyrim have recently scored over 90% in Play.**

**This is a terrible turn of events, and is directly related to the last point you make, regarding Sonic 06 and Sonic Unleashed. Sonic 06 is atrocious, and why it scored as much as it did is to do with who was on the Play team at that time. In any case, it's a 4% difference between them. And neither game is good.**

**If you can count on Play for one thing, it's that we're going to use the whole of the scale wisely. If you see a game scoring above 80% in these pages then you know it's worth your money.**



# PLAY

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# The Future Of PlayStation

Interview by David Crookes

How long has PlayStation 3 got left? What  
can we expect from PlayStation Vita?  
What about PlayStation 4? We put these  
questions to Sony itself...





# PLAYSTATION 3 HAD A CHALLENGE AT ITS START WITH ITS PRICE POINT BUT I THINK NOBODY EVER DOUBTED THE STRENGTH OF THE SYSTEM



**MICHAEL DENNY**  
Senior vice president of Sony  
Computer Entertainment  
Worldwide Studio

**Looking back at the life of the PlayStation 3 so far, what would you cite as the biggest success to date?**  
Well, I think you look at where PlayStation 3 is now and you can see we're in a great position. I mean, this year itself – 2011 – in terms of the software releases, we've had the likes of *Killzone 3* and *LittleBigPlanet 2* starting the year, and then we've moved through to this selling season of bigger, third-party games like *Modern Warfare*, first-party games like *Resistance 3* and the blockbuster that is *Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception*. Marry that with

the price drop and the fact we have a motion control system that's taking off as well and I think at this stage into the platform the momentum is really there. Consumers are still looking to have lots more of it.

**Do you think there was a slow start to the PS3?**

I think PlayStation 3 had a challenge at its start with its price point but I think nobody ever doubted the strength of the system and the software that was going

to be produced for the system and the experience people were getting out of the system. And I think what we've seen over the years is that experience get better and better. When you look at a game like *Uncharted 3*, developers are really unlocking the potential that we always knew the system had.

**PlayStation 3 has its own advantages as a system independent of**

**exclusives in terms of PlayStation Network, Home, Blu-ray, portable connectivity and so on. Do those advantages lessen the importance of exclusive titles like *Uncharted*?**

I think those are all great features of PlayStation 3. They've helped the system and kept it relevant and we have lots of great gaming experiences from our third-party partners. Games

like *Modern Warfare* are always fantastic for our system but I think it's the job of first-party titles, exclusive

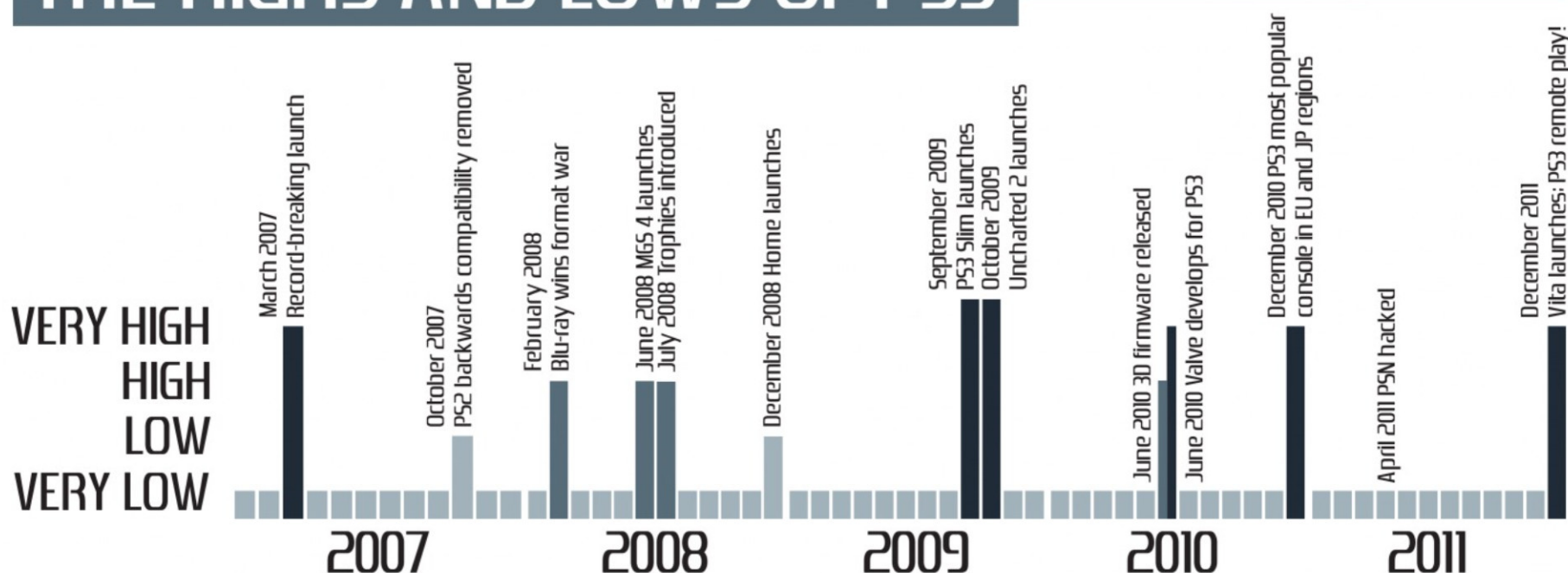
**“The big discussion at the moment for us is our future platform, which is PlayStation Vita”**

titles – whether that be an *Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception* or whether it be innovative titles such as *Heavy Rain* or *LittleBigPlanet* – that really help differentiate our platform from the experiences you can get on other platforms and I think one thing that is sure about consumers is that they crave new things. So, to give customers new innovative experiences that are exclusive to your platform, >



Killzone 3 was one of 2011's big releases.

## THE HIGHS AND LOWS OF PS3





# Four PS3 Games We're Looking Forward To In 2012



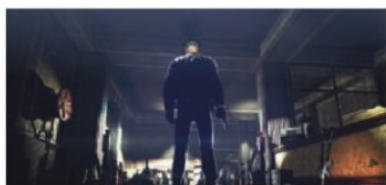
## BioShock Infinite

Next year's best game? Quite possibly. After skipping *BioShock 2* to devote all of its energy to this, Irrational Games has had the time and has the staff and ideas to make this one of the best games of the generation. Only *GTA V* can top this...



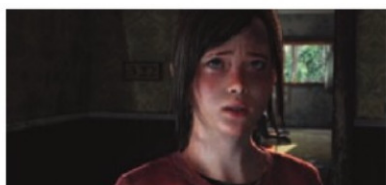
## GTA V

It's actually happening, and if it doesn't come out this year we'll cry all the water out of our bodies. *GTA IV* was unfairly criticised for not being fun, but with a return to San Andreas (and a whole host of toys to play with, including fighter jets) in the offing this will be brilliant.



## Hitman Absolution

There's a lot of nervous chatter surrounding the return of Agent 47, but we're quietly confident that this is going to be a triumphant return after six years away. A new engine and a new focus – while retaining the core values that define the franchise – means this could be the best assassin sim yet.



## The Last Of Us

Released at the end of the year? Maybe, just maybe. Specifics on Naughty Dog's new post-apocalyptic IP are a mystery at the moment, but following its spectacular reveal at last year's VGAs we want to get our hands on this immediately.



Heavy Rain: one of PS3's best exclusives.

## We don't discuss future plans that aren't announced

> I think is always going to be a compelling proposition.

### And what do you think the future of the PlayStation 3 is at the moment?

Well, I think when you look at this year there's real momentum there and I think at the price point window we're at now and with the development teams getting so much more out of the PlayStation 3 on the software side, that experience is only going to keep going forward and consumers are going to keep wanting more of it.

### How much discussion has there been about PlayStation 4?

The big discussion at the moment for us is our future platform, which is PlayStation Vita, which launches next year. That's still the focus of

our next-gen concentration. We had another launch in

London only this week to announce the launch lineup and where we'll be going with PlayStation Vita in February.

### So there hasn't been any discussion about a PlayStation 4 at this stage?

We don't discuss future plans that aren't announced.

### Do you think the PlayStation 3 will continue for quite a number of years?

Yeah, we were just talking about that, I think. We're at a stage with the momentum of PlayStation 3 and developers locking a lot of potential in the system still. It will see it going for many more years.

### What sort of life span do you think the PlayStation 3 could have?

We have always talked about our consoles having a ten-year life cycle and I see no reason, when you look at the games still coming through for PlayStation 3 and the price point PlayStation 3 is currently at, that wouldn't be the case.

### So, you'll be looking at a ten-year life span and then introducing a new console after that?

I didn't say anything about a new console. I was talking about the life cycle of PlayStation 3.

### Obviously PlayStation Vita's launch is just around the corner and there's been a lot of talk about how smartphone gaming has affected the portable market, have you looked at the success of smartphone gaming and tried to bring an element of that to PlayStation Vita? Or do you think Vita's success lies entirely outside of the smartphone sphere?

I think when you look at the PlayStation Vita that we're very differentiated from what smartphones offer. People who care about gaming are going to look at PlayStation Vita. The hardware feature set is new and innovative. It has new interfaces, dual analogue sticks for the first time, a portable device, front



Modern Warfare 3 is PS3's biggest online game.



powered by PlayStation  
1 hour ago via Tweetbot for iPhone

@yosp  
Shuhei Yoshida

@Wario64 Does your iPhone have Uncharted?

1 hour ago via PlayStationVita

Sony summing up smartphone vs Vita debate.





LittleBigPlanet 2 expanded PS3's reach.



Resistance 3 was the series' high point.

touch, rear touchpad, a five-inch OLED screen – it's all very appealing. And it will lend itself perfectly to deeper, richer, immersive experiences that will differentiate us from other portable gaming systems out there. But in terms of attracting a wider gaming audience as well, of course we can have content that is smaller, more bite-sized content that's more immediate. The social connectivity aspects of Vita, including the in-built application, such as Neo and Live Area and Party, will make it very relevant to a casual audience.

#### The sales for Nintendo's 3DS have been seen as disappointing. How will Sony avoid this happening to PlayStation Vita?

I think you need three things to have a successful platform launch. Number one is the hardware needs to be truly differentiated through next-gen feature sets for the hardware. I think the second thing is a strong launch lineup of software games and with both first-party and the new first-party games we announced this week as well, and the third-party lineup, we believe we have one of the strongest lineups ever, and of course an appealing price point. And when you look at the feature set, at the hardware that we have, we feel that is very appealing as well. So, you know, we concentrate on our own strategy and we believe the package we have for Vita at launch is going to be very compelling.

#### Do you think there are any lessons to be pulled from what Nintendo has done with 3DS?

We concentrate on our own strategy and I think the most important things for us is that we are truly differentiated from what the market currently offers

and we have a true next-gen offering with great software support at a great price point.

#### What do you see as being key to the success of PlayStation Vita?

Focus and direction and keeping that stream of great software products coming throughout the year and into future years as well. I think the social connectivity in the device will keep it very relevant and help it be part of a gaming revolution, in terms of the connectivity of gaming, as well as people's social use of the network.



and we have to make sure we have our cost structures and base fitting accordingly to our plans. But I think the key, even in difficult economic times, is to be able to continue to innovate, is to be able to continue to try to give the

consumer something new. And if we can continue to do that, and come up with new ideas, new experiences like Vita at an appealing price point, then I feel that consumers will still latch on to the experience.

#### What is the key thing you believe the next round of consoles should be focusing on?

The next round of consoles for us is PSVita and you can take the learnings from where we go with PlayStation Vita as part of PlayStation DNA. Number >

“The hardware has to differentiate from the competition, it has to have new feature sets and innovation that helps with usability and the consumer's experience”

#### Does the state of the economy worry you at all?

The state of the economy is difficult for all industries at the moment and I know it's often said that videogaming as an industry is perhaps more insulated to fluctuations in the economy than some other industries. I think we all see the value in videogaming and that it's a form of entertainment that people will still like to consume. Relative to other forms of entertainment, it is great value for money but the reality is that we have to be aware of economic times

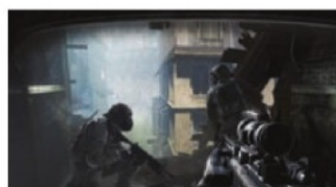
## PS4 SPEC SHEET

No one outside Sony (and its partners, of course) really knows what's actually going into the PS4, but using Play's mighty powers of deduction we've managed to work out what might be in there, with a dash of wishful thinking thrown in for good measure.

|                         |                                                                                                                                                  |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| CPU                     | Intel-powered Sandy Bridge CPU                                                                                                                   |
| GPU                     | Nvidia-powered GPU, equivalent to current GTX 580 standard                                                                                       |
| Sound                   | Dolby 7.1ch, DTS                                                                                                                                 |
| Memory                  | 4GB Unified RAM                                                                                                                                  |
| Storage                 | 320GB hard disk drive                                                                                                                            |
| Inputs                  | 3 x USB 3.0<br>1 x slot loading Blu-ray Disc drive                                                                                               |
| Backwards Compatibility | PSone                                                                                                                                            |
| Networking              | 1 x Ethernet<br>Bluetooth<br>Wi-Fi                                                                                                               |
| Inputs                  | New PlayStation controller (x7, Bluetooth)<br>PSVita Remote Play + Control (Wi-Fi)<br>Next generation PlayStation Eye (with supplied sensor bar) |
| Resolutions             | 480i, 480p, 720p, 1080i, 1080p                                                                                                                   |
| Video Outputs           | HDMI out, AV multi out                                                                                                                           |
| Audio Outputs           | Digital out                                                                                                                                      |
| Form Factor and Design  | Black; much smaller than launch PS3; closer to PS3 Slim in size; ability to be stored horizontally or vertically (with rotating PS logo).        |



# 5 FRANCHISES WE CAN'T WAIT TO SEE ON PS4



## Call Of Duty

COD's best-in-class run-'n'-gun gameplay mixed with next-generation graphics? Yes, please. It's going to be very interesting to see how *Call of Duty* transitions over to the next generation, and whether or not they'll be brave enough to change the winning formula beyond visual. We bet not.



## PES/FIFA

*PES* dominated the PSone/PlayStation 2 eras, while *FIFA* won the battle on PlayStation 3. Who's going to take the crown on the next generation of consoles? With *FIFA* slipping this year – and *PES* growing slightly stronger – the title race is set to be fiercer than ever.



## Uncharted

With the trilogy having been completed on PS3, some fools would have you believe that Naughty Dog is finished with *Uncharted*. Wrong-o, friends. This franchise is going to run and run, and after already pushing PS3 to its limits we can't wait to see what happens next gen.



## Metal Gear Solid

The *MGS* series has been synonymous with PlayStation ever since the original tore up sales charts on the original console. *MGS 2* convinced gamers to buy a PS2. *MGS 4* was a system seller on PS3. Expect *MGS 5* to make a big splash when it eventually lands.



## Tomb Raider

There's a new *Tomb Raider* just around the corner that's looking pretty damn slick as it is but imagine how Lara Croft would look with next-generation horsepower under the car bonnet. Phwoaar! Even dirtier! In a muddy way, we mean. Not in THAT way. Ahem.

Will *Killzone* feature on PS3's eventual successor?



> one, the hardware has to differentiate from the competition, it has to have new feature sets and innovation that helps with usability and the consumer's experience. Then we have to have genuinely great new games, great new software experiences that, again, feel like a true next-gen experience – experiences that they, the consumers, have not had before. So, all those things are always going to be relevant.

**There's a worry that the next generation of consoles will bring high development costs, effectively pricing some studios out of the market. What are your thoughts on that?**

I think it's a more general question. I'm not talking about the next generation of consoles. Cute phrasing, your questions. I'll talk to you more generally about development costs and clearly there's now a wide proliferation of different game experiences. You know, we can have some game experiences that are sold for less than a pound, less than a euro, and the development cost of those games suit that business model accordingly, and the experience that people expect. We obviously have games now, whether it's *Call of Duty*, whether

it's *Killzone*, whether it's *Uncharted 3*, that are a much bigger experience, that have much larger budgets – Hollywood movie-type budgets – but all those games are still very, very popular. They still, in a way, drive what games really want in terms of a deep, rich, large immersive experience. The reality is that all those games are all still very profitable. Now, to your question, yes there is a high barrier of entry to make those games, there is a large budget and a large team that goes with it, so it's about marrying the right teams with the right genres with the right products in terms of what we want to put in to such games, what we want to get out of such games and what the consumer experience and expectation is of those games.

**Do you think we'll move to a time when it's purely digital downloads?**

I think it's about consumer choice and user experience. So, if you're talking about small size games, perhaps for a mobile device, then you can see a trend in consumer choice of digital delivery seems very appealing and it's very fast

and works very efficiently as a user experience. If you're talking about a much larger experience, maybe 25GB or higher, I still think the consumer choice and the user experience of picking that up on a disc at retail currently prevails. As broadband speeds increase and as other technologies change and as consumer demands change, maybe there's a shift in that but I think from our point of view we just have to be aware of what consumers want and make sure we're making all those options available as we need to.

**What can we expect from Sony going forward?**

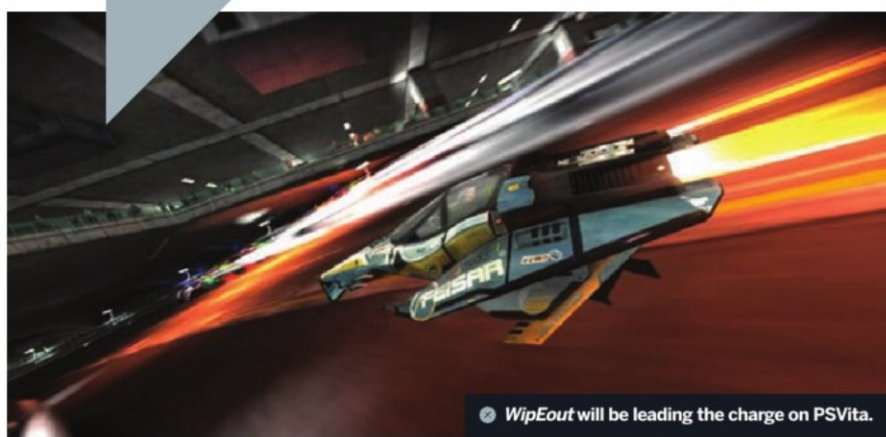
More innovation, more great games, more passion and really, as we say, we're all about the games and with PlayStation Vita, the people who care about gaming on portable platforms going forward. It's going to be a great experience and that's something that's going to be very exciting here in Europe for us next year. With PlayStation 3 we're hitting our stride, the momentum's with us and we look forward to launching not just more but new and innovative experiences for PlayStation 3 as well.

“We obviously have games now, whether it's *Call of Duty*, whether it's *Killzone*, whether it's *Uncharted 3*, that are a much bigger experience, that have much larger budgets”





# WE ALWAYS WANT THE BEST AND THAT'S THE KEY MOTIVATOR



WipEout will be leading the charge on PSVita.

## GRAEME ANKERS, GAME DIRECTOR AT SONY

### > What has been the overriding factor for the PS3's eventual success?

It's a fantastic, very powerful console. It's a very great piece of kit to work with and graphically it has all the power that you can get out of the device as well, but it's also very connected.

### How important are exclusives?

I think it goes beyond exclusive titles and exclusive games and includes exclusive experiences. But those games are almost the signature titles that define what a platform is. What we try to do is really push technical innovation and deliver a great experience for the platform.

### There's been talk about the PSVita being quite an easy platform to program. Is that what you've found?

That's absolutely what we've found, actually. It was particularly quick to get things up and running on it. You can basically get whatever you're working on up on screen, rendering very quickly. And it's actually a very powerful device, you know. We were pushing it very hard. The amount of physical data that we would put through to the home console, like the PlayStation 3, we were pushing to PSVita. So, from a technical point of view we're pushing about 250,000 polygons per frame on PlayStation Vita, which is almost exactly the same benchmark that we were doing on PlayStation 3 with *WipEout HD* and *Fury*. And then we've got a shader system, that's a similar level of

complexity to the home console, so you could really see how powerful the device actually is and the beautiful screen, the OLED screen, just makes everything pop, so when we're demonstrating cross play at shows, a lot of people have been coming up to us and literally holding the PSVita up against the PlayStation 3 and saying it actually looks better on the Vita, which is a real compliment, because the PS3 game at the time was a real sort of graphical benchmark, being this triple-A PSN type.

### From a developer's point of view, what do you expect in five/ten years' time?

I think you've just got to push innovation. That's the key to it in anything that you do and I think in a lot of ways PlayStation Vita's still quite new to us and we've been getting some fantastic results out of the PlayStation Vita itself. Even then I feel like we're still only touching the surface in this whole sort of connected and social space. It's about getting your gaming experiences and getting your friends and family and people connected to that experience. But I think going forward from there, that's definitely the area to explore and I think that's almost regardless of whatever you're developing, but for me that's where the kind of social and connected experiences are going to really help push and define gaming, and particularly so for PlayStation Vita.

### Do you think it's fair to say that the major innovations over the past few

### years have been in graphics and controllers and do you think that's going to continue?

Yeah, I think that's set to continue, but I think you've got to also take a view of the much broader experiences as well, so emotional gaming, for instance. Titles like *Heavy Rain*... it's kind of innovated with how you control an interface but also the story and the narrative and the richness of a world and bringing that to life as an experience for players. I think that did a fantastic job and I think that it's a mixture of both.

### We're not at the level of photorealism just yet, would you say?

I think, from my experience, we've not really made character-based games at Studio Liverpool, certainly for a long time, but it seems to all be in the eyes and that's one of the very difficult things to actually sort of get right. But, you know, all the time I think that kind of thing's improving, you can see it in the games currently that are coming out now, they're already getting that sort of more cinematic feel, that more kind of directed feel of the gameplay experiences, as well.

### Would you like to see more power in the PS3?

You know, I think if you look back to a title like *God Of War*, which came out later on on PlayStation 2, you could see that the developers had just worked with the engine so much that they were getting the best results out of it and I guess that's always the way. As developers, we always want the absolute best and that's the key motivator. You know, whatever it is that you're doing, you want to get the best experience out of that.

### The Nintendo 3DS didn't initially sell as well as Nintendo would have hoped it would. Do you think Sony could learn anything from that?

I think, for PlayStation Vita, it's very clear about what it is as a device. And we're really just touching the surface on the social and connected experience. That makes it quite a unique thing, I think. And those, I think, are its strengths and hopefully in that sort of landscape of mobile gaming, I think it stands out. ☒

## WHAT'S THE COMPETITION UP TO?

### Microsoft's 'Nextbox'

Despite the fact that the machine was underspec'd at launch – no inbuilt wireless? – and broke if you so much as looked at it, the 360 has been a roaring success for Microsoft. Rumours suggest

## Microsoft®

that the company is hard at work on a successor, powered by AMD's latest technology. Expect it to pour trillions into family-friendly marketing, integrated Kinect and expanded multimedia capabilities.



### Apple's iOS

With the Apple juggernaut demolishing everything in its path and reinventing the mobile gaming sector, all eyes are on Apple's 'inevitable' move to the home console market. We're not so sure it will, at least not for a while yet and not with a machine that can seriously challenge the main players in terms of power. That's not to say that it won't release anything, however...

### Nintendo's Wii U

Revealed at E3 2011 to a concerted 'WHAT THE EFF IS THAT?', Nintendo spectacularly dropped the ball announcing the thing – we're still not really sure what it is. That said, Nintendo is the master

## Nintendo®

at marketing and no doubt everyone will want to get their hands on yet more outdated hardware and gimmicky control inputs. Sadly, this will be a success, and everyone else will copy it. Sigh.



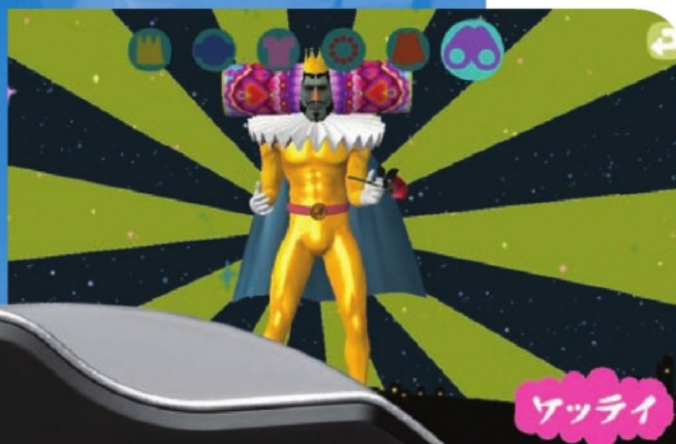
# PS VITA™

# THE FUTURE IS IN YOUR HANDS





# OUT IN JAPAN, COMING SOON TO THE REST OF US: WHAT CAN WE EXPECT FROM VITA?



**O**n 22 February it arrives – four years in the making, Sony's newest handheld and the great hope for the future of the company's portable gaming wing. Yes, folks: PSVita is here. And thanks to the wonder that is staggered release dates we've been able to see how it went down in Japan ahead of its launch over on European and US shores – will it be a success? Has it fared well so far? And what is Sony planning for the portable device that appears to have All Of The Technology?

Vita's launch in Japan, back on 17 December, saw over 300,000 units sold in the first couple of days. Queues weren't looping around the block a dozen times and it was easy to find units in many shops. Does that mean a lack of interest? Unlikely. It means slower sales than expected and, naturally, a dent taken out of handheld gaming's market share by smartphones and tablets. It didn't indicate the end of the world for Sony and, bar some teething problems in some units, early adopters seemed to be happy with their purchase and the 24 games available from day one.

Sony has experienced a change in tack, at least according to Shuhei Yoshida, vice president of Sony Computer Entertainment, who told the PlayStation Blog that Kaz Hirai's arrival at the company has changed how the company works at a very basic level: "We made brilliant hardware, no question of that, but our hardware team didn't have such a good understanding of what game developers need or what features might be useful."

An easier-to-develop-for system means better games – and more of them – as well as stronger support from devs through the console's life span (evidenced by the dozens of launch games we'll see over here). Nintendo's 3DS fell down because of a weak launch lineup married to the wrong price – more on that later – and Vita's launch lineup is about as strong as we've ever seen for a hardware launch.

It's not just about the launch, though, and while it's still early days, Sony already has some idea of where it wants to go and what it wants to do with Vita. As Yoshida said: "Generally we look three years ahead when we work on games. We have a fairly firm plan right up to 2013... I'm certain we will end up working on more games than we even know about at this moment."

It's not all sunshine and roses, as much as a hardware launch can be compared to weather and flowers. The Vita sales tumbled sharply in Japan on its second week on sale, shifting 72,000 units. Nintendo ran into similar problems with its 3DS, which saw its sales tumble in Japan as it also experienced second-week blues following its launch week high. Nintendo responded aggressively with a price cut. Sony is adamant it won't follow suit. >



## THE GAMES

### Uncharted: Golden Abyss

PlayStation's current biggest hitter and a reason for many to pick up a Vita day-one. Is it as good as UC2 or 3? Probably not. Is it still good? Probably yes.

### Power Smash 4 (Virtua Tennis 4)

We all need a good sports game on launch, so why not settle for one of the best tennis games of recent years? And why not add in some odd touch controls?

### Minna No Golf 6 (Everybody's Golf)

Apparently the biggest seller of Vita's Japanese launch, it's heartening to see our friends in the East are people of good taste. *Everybody's Golf* is great: get on board.

### Katamari Damacy Novita (Touch My Katamari)

It seems people *are* loving the music and it seems they *are* loving the King Of All Cosmos. So it seems touch-controlled sticky ball rolling works as well as we had hoped.

### Ridge Racer

An interesting experiment by Namco Bandai – a cheaper entry price with less content included, topped up by DLC – hasn't proved to be too popular with the Japanese market.

### Shin Sangoku Musou Next (Dynasty Warriors Next)

We're worried that *Dynasty Warriors* on Vita will mean shattered screens from having to tap them too much. We should stress there have been no reports of this actually happening.



## PLAY SAYS

“There's no question Vita's launch was a success in Japan, but the figures – while impressive – certainly didn't blow anyone away. Could this point to similar figures for the European and US launches? We're not sure. Either way, the impact of smartphones on the portable gaming market cannot be ignored, and PSVita will have to come out swinging to stand a chance in a highly competitive market.”

## HARDWARE SALES TO SHIPMENT SIZE

Percentage sell-through 64.9%

Units reportedly sold in first two days of sale 324,859

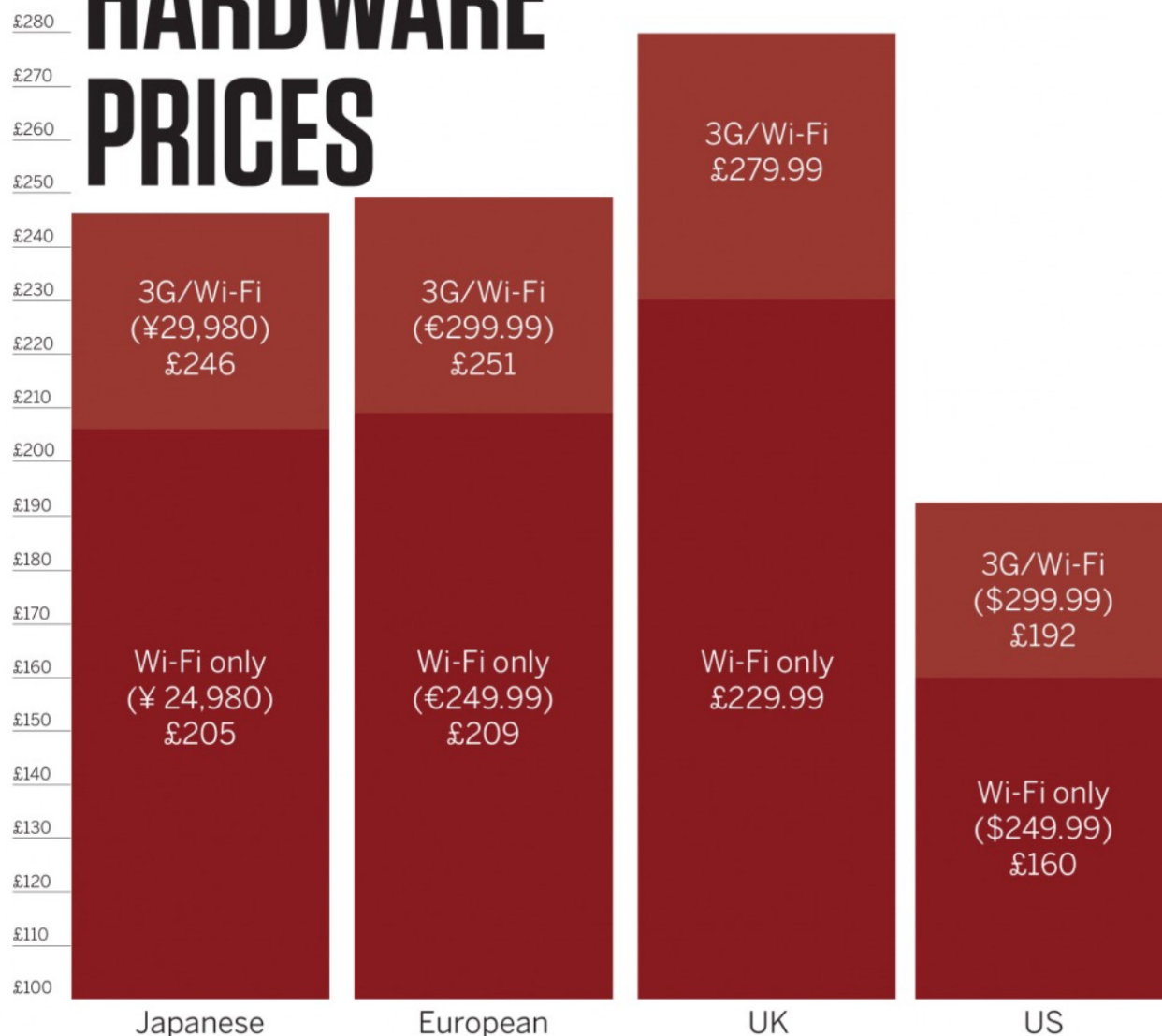
Units reportedly shipped 500,000

## FOUR GAMES MADE IT INTO THE JAPANESE ALL FORMAT TOP 20 FOLLOWING VITA'S LAUNCH...





# HARDWARE PRICES



> So what can we read into Vita's sales plummeting in its second week on sale? Mainly, that price is key. As explained above, smartphones will have taken a chunk out of Vita's sales (and that of the 3DS, too) but it's worth noting that the smartphone gaming presence is often overplayed. The market for smartphone gaming is growing at a stunning rate, that much is true, but those buying smartphone games aren't the ones who would have bought a portable gaming device to begin with. To put it into simpler terms: your mum might now be playing *Angry Birds* but that doesn't mean she's a lost Vita sale, as she was never a potential Vita customer to begin with.

Second, Nintendo's teething troubles with the 3DS has shown that price is a factor, something Sony will have to admit should Vita run into a brick wall in its Western launch. When Nintendo responded to the mediocre 3DS sales by

slashing the price by 40%, the sales bounced right back. This suggests that price was the big obstacle, not that the market for portable gaming is shrinking. Another bizarre fact emerged during week two of Vita's sales that backed that fact up: the older, cheaper PSP outsold Vita. Again, this points to price being a bigger factor than Sony may want to admit. There are people out there who want portable Sony gaming but only at the right price.

Predicting a rousing, runaway success would seem like folly in the current marketplace. But there's definitely a place for Vita: a handheld with a lot of gimmicks, but at its core aimed at gamers. A defined purpose and a definite angle of attack – no confusion for those buying it like you might get with multifaceted smartphones and tablets. Will Vita take over the world? We don't know. Will it do well? We think it deserves to. ☒

## THE GAMES

### Dream Club Zero Portable

It wouldn't be videogames in Japan if we didn't have a title where a man tries to make a woman working at a hostess bar fall in love with him. Also it features 'erotic eating'. Hmm.

### Makai Senki Disgaea 3 Return

Every handheld needs a true timesink title to really lose yourself in, and PSVita was released with one of the best. *Disgaea 3* is perfect for portable.

### Shinobido 2: Sange

The original developer of *Tenchu* returned with a game we are intrigued by, and a sequel we frankly never expected to see. Be a ninja, but now with touch screen joy added.

### Asphalt: Injection

Not to be entirely dismissive ahead of any review, but a forgettable portable racer – retooled with touchpad and gyroscopic controls – doesn't fill our hearts with a great deal of desire. One to be wary of.

### Lord Of Apocalypse

*Lord Of Apocalypse* allows you to battle the likes of Cexes, Cthulu and other massive bosses before recruiting them to your cause. Think *Monster Hunter*, with less monsters (and more Cthulu).

### Ultimate Marvel Vs Capcom 3

For some reason you can't use Vita's built-in screengrab function to take shots of Capcom's conversion of its good (if rather cheeky) brawler. That doesn't stop it from translating well to the handheld, though.

### Sawari Makuru (Little Deviants)

The sort-of tech demo that covers all of Vita's features has been well-received by those picking it up on its release.

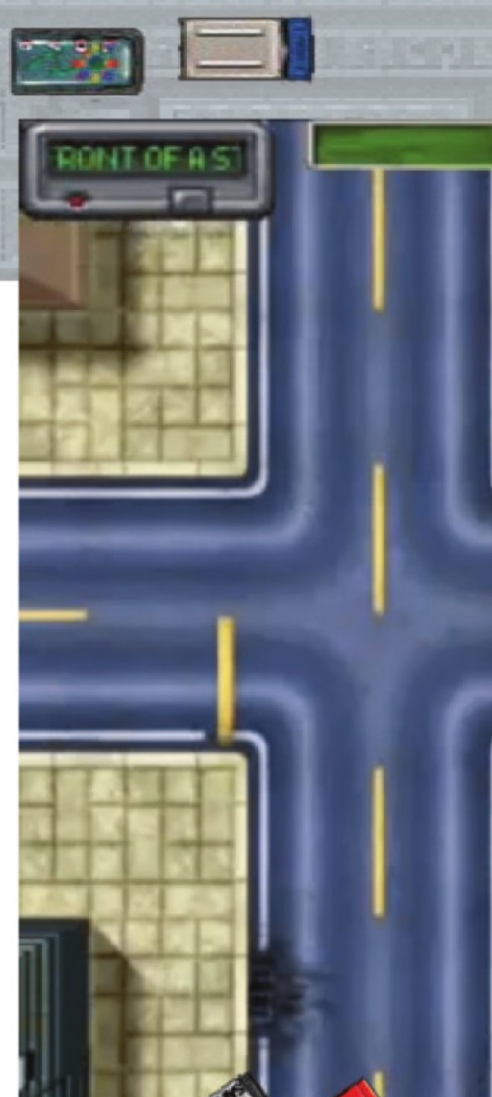
### F1 2011

Well, there's always at least one thing to upset people in a launch lineup, and it seems *F1 2011* is sharing that dubious honour with *Asphalt*. Just look at it: it inspires very little confidence.





# Grand Theft Auto ORIGIN



● If you can find a copy of *Grand Theft Auto*, play it – it's still brilliant fun.

# THE REAL STORY BEHIND Grand Theft Auto

David Crookes speaks to those behind the original GTA as they reveal the series' secrets and how they helped influence Rockstar's modern-day super-franchise

## CHEATING THE SYSTEM

"GTA on PC was in development for almost five years in some form or another," stated David Cowan of Visual Designs, which ported the game to the original PlayStation. "Originally starting off life as a 'city simulator' where everything was fully working and simulated (traffic lights, trains, people, cars and so on)... but the scope was so large, and there was no apparent gameplay to be had. It got scaled back a bit, and the mission system got added. Interestingly, the missions were incomplete until the last three months of the game. Until that point, there was no real game."

"One of Sony's [testing] requirements was called 'The soak test' – the game needed to run for 12 consecutive hours on the front end/splash screen and demo cycle without crashing, so that it could be booted up in shop windows without a controller or user input. We had a tiny memory leak during the front end/demo cycle that caused the game to crash after exactly six hours – it was something we could never find, and it was getting perilously close to our release window. Eventually, we decided to cheat – after six hours of demo cycling, we made the console 'warm reboot' – ie reset/reboot straight back into the game (without going through the SCEE/SCEI licence screens, intro movies and so on). Sony never noticed, and we passed the test."



## VIEW FROM THE TOP

"The initial meetings were somewhat chaotic," team leader and lead programmer Keith Hamilton told us. "The only agreed direction was that we were basically writing a game that we would want to play ourselves. Everything had to be interactive. The player had to be able to drive any vehicle he could find. Nothing was to be off-limits. We wanted fun situations to present themselves just by all the elements coming together – not necessarily in ways that were specially designed."

"We never seriously considered going full 3D. We wanted to spend all our time, and all the CPU's time, on making a believable living, breathing city. Also, crucially, the top-down view allowed you to see what was going on all around you. The police cars do funny things (eg crashing into each other) when they're trying to chase you – something that you just aren't aware of with only a forward-facing view."





● Consoles at the time couldn't support GTA in 3D, hence the top-down view.

# THE REAL STORY BEHIND GTA



## MISSION IMPOSSIBLE

"The one aspect of the game design that I'm most proud of was pushing through the non-linear mission system and embedding mission choice into the game environment," Paul Farley, who handled the map design and mission programming told us. "The first iteration of the game had players returning to a sub-menu to select their next mission but I felt this broke the immersive nature of the game. Coming up with the idea of spawning missions from phone booths, characters, vehicles and other in-game elements was groundbreaking at the time and made a huge difference to the player's suspension of disbelief."

"However, I don't think the code team were initially very pleased. They had never designed the engine to run indefinitely and the new mission structure certainly created a number of new issues for them to solve."



● The original GTA looks primitive today but was amazing for its time.



● The mission structure of subsequent GTA games owe a lot to the original.

## 3D, OR NOT 3D?

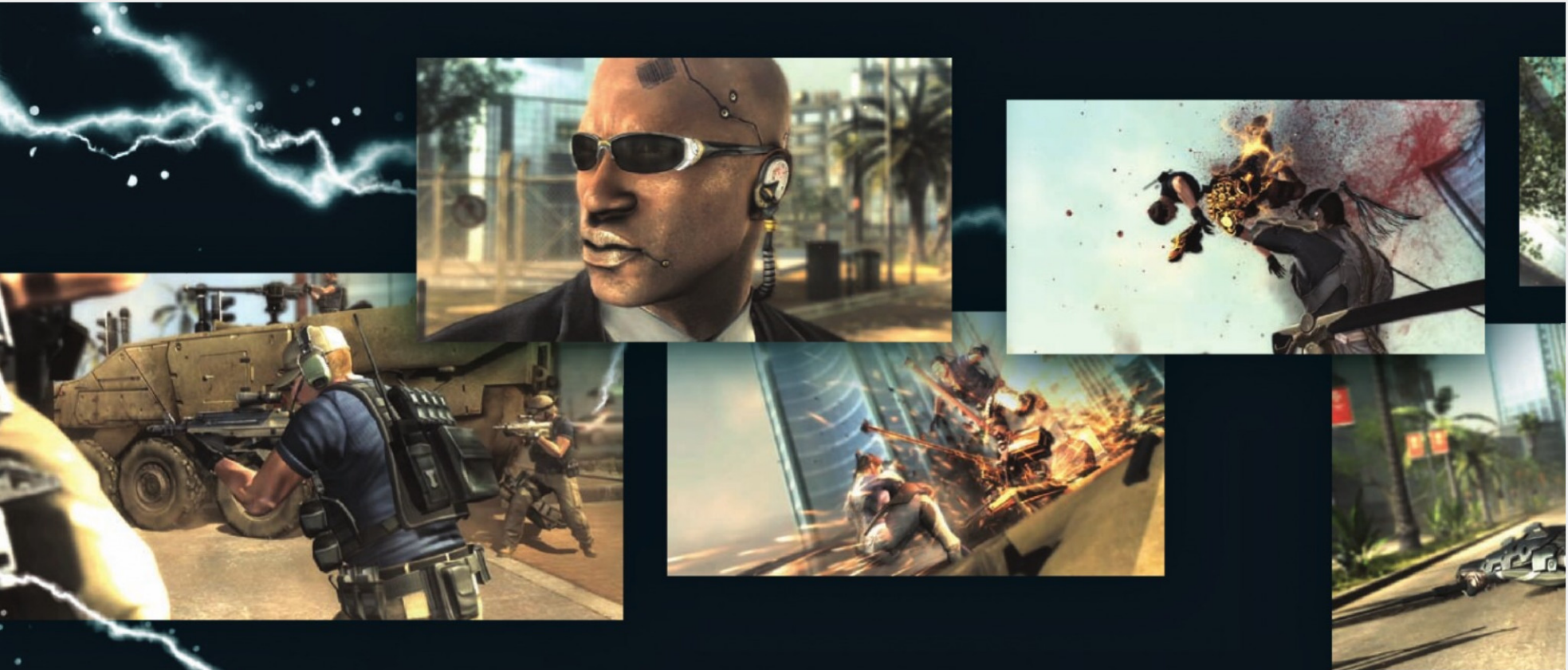
"While it was theoretically possible to do 3D on the PC, the console versions simply wouldn't support it," Brian Baglow, GTA's writer, told us. "So the choices were to more or less develop two different game engines, or focus on making the game as rich and deep and fun as we could on an engine which would run across all of the platforms."

"We ended up losing the original maps, which is a tragedy. We had created full maps for each town and around the border of each were adverts for local businesses, vouchers and tourist destinations – all made up and in-keeping with the style and feel of each city. It's one of the few things I never managed to get a copy of or find when the company became Rockstar North. In my imagination they were awesome. In real life, well, we may never know..."



● From the original GTA to now: Grand Theft Auto V. How far we've come, right?





# THE SHOCKING TRUTH BEHIND METAL GEAR R E V E N D

TWO YEARS OF SILENCE FOLLOWED BY AN EXPLOSIVE COMEBACK? ALL IS NOT AS IT SEEMS, AS RYAN KING LOOKS AT THE TRUE STORY BEHIND THE TROUBLED TITLE...







**T**his is not a *Metal Gear Solid* game. You may have noticed the absence of 'Solid' in the shouty electric font below and thought maybe it was a mistake, we're having an off-day, it's cool because you know it's supposed to say '*Metal Gear Solid Rising: Revengeance*'. Except you're wrong. This is not a *Metal Gear Solid* game. Hell, it's not even made by the famed *Metal Gear Solid* team. No, this is a spin-off by Platinum Games, of *Bayonetta* and *Vanquish* fame. A series that made its name on stealth now finds itself with a developer famed for its gun-heeled, high-kicking heroine, hence the 'Solid' being sliced from the title with surgical precision. We'll give that a few seconds to sink in. And... there. Strange, right?

*Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance* isn't so much a rebirth as it is a rescue operation. When *Metal Gear Solid: Rising* was first announced, the premise was that of a game centred on Raiden's sword. The original trailer, which made its bow at E3 2009, showed Raiden carving up enemies, cars, even levels as supporting pillars were severed and platforms were brought crashing down. The internet exploded with excitement. Then, where we normally get whisked away in the tornado of screenshots, trailers, interviews and gameplay



ND

# METAL GEAR RISING REVENGEANCE



demos, there was silence. Time passed. Nothing. People presumed no news is good news but in the offices of Kojima Productions, it was turmoil. The story, characters and cut-scenes were set. The problem? Everything else.

"We were lost when it came to the game design," admits 3DCG adviser Hideki Sasaki. "We were struggling with the balance between stealth and action. We also had trouble maintaining balance between level design and the concept of being able to freely cut through anything and everything. We were at a point where these problems were causing major delays and we weren't getting results."

"The concept was a game in which everything could be cut," continues producer Yuji Korekado. "This presented a great technical challenge. One day as I was busy pushing the team to meet our deadlines, I was called in to speak with Mr Kojima at the end of the year. Mr Kojima told me the project would never be complete at this pace. I didn't want the game to be cancelled, so I told him about the good elements we had and tried to bargain for more time. But the problem, Mr Kojima said, was that the team wasn't working together. There wasn't a strong director in place who could pull us all together in the right direction. I had nothing to say to that argument." >





> Although he initially tried not to get involved, Kojima was caught up in the chaos, on the verge of cancelling *Rising* but not before one last throw of the dice – outsourcing the project to another studio. Initially, Kojima considered a Western studio but realised the intrinsically Japanese nature of *Metal Gear*, and particularly that of a game starring a sword-fighting ninja, meant a Japanese studio would suit the project best. Narrowing down the list of candidates, Kojima decided on Platinum Games, who had released *Bayonetta* and *Vanquish* to critical acclaim. Platinum Games CEO Tatsuya Minami explains the story: “I went to a party, a reunion, and Mr Kojima asked me, ‘How have you been? I would like you to help me out with something.’ At first, I thought it was a joke. Later, when he repeated the question in a more serious tone, I knew it was real. Then he told me the title. I had heard about the project. I thought it was going well. However, Mr Kojima told me that it wasn’t going too well and he wanted to restart the project with us.”

This brings us to now, with *Metal Gear Solid: Rising* dead and *Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance* being lifted from its wreckage as a glorious, dramatic new angle on the silver-haired cyborg ninja. The game now takes place after *Metal Gear Solid 4*, although it’s not considered canon to the storyline. The speed of the gameplay has also been kicked up a notch for this *Revengeance* reincarnation, which has Raiden stopping a Metal Gear Ray attack with his arms and launching the giant robot into the air before flying after it, running his sword through the middle. Enemies are sliced in slow motion, as before, except Raiden doesn’t cleanly cut through them once or twice to show off his guard-into-sushi skills – it’s now an explosion of quick cuts and blood sloshing everywhere before a kick turns the body into red mist. >



## THE MEN BEHIND REVENGEANCE

NAME:  
**ATSUSHI INABA**

AGE:  
40

JOB:  
Director, Platinum Games

CURRENTLY:  
Executive director,  
*Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance*

FIRST GAME:  
*Bomberman World*  
(Arcade, 1992)

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS:  
*Okami*, *Vanquish*

CRAZIEST IDEA:  
Magical paintbrush as main form  
of combat in *Okami*

SAYS:  
“I know reaction to the  
new trailer is mixed. Yet I also  
believe our love and respect  
shines through.”



NAME:  
**HIDEO KOJIMA**

AGE:  
48

JOB:  
Director, Kojima Productions

CURRENTLY:  
Executive producer,  
*Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance*

FIRST GAME:  
*Metal Gear* (MSX2, 1987)

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS:  
*Metal Gear Solid*,  
*Zone Of The Enders*

CRAZIEST IDEA:  
Week-long boss battle against  
The End for *Metal Gear Solid 3*

SAYS:  
“My only favour I asked of  
Platinum was ‘cool Raiden who  
moves without feeling awkward  
at 60 frames per second’”

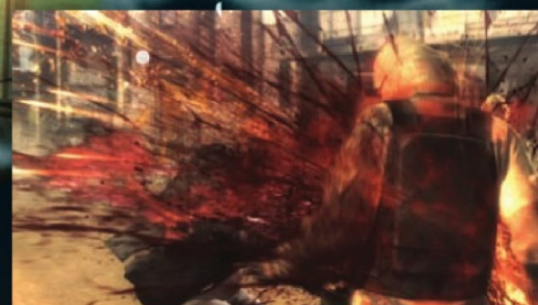




# WHERE IS BAYONETTA'S PRODUCER?



"Hey everyone, I said 10,000,000,000,000 times that I have nothing to do with *Metal Gear Rising*." We've lobbed off a couple of zeroes but the point is the same – Platinum Games might be involved with *Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance* but the *Bayonetta* producer Hideki Kamiya is not. Current producer and co-Platinum Games man Atsushi Inaba feels that if Kamiya was involved, *Revengeance* would be delayed and Kamiya would clash with Kojima. "The game would be delayed because I'm so lazy and busy on Twitter," Kamiya jokes. "And we would have a huge fight because we're both too stubborn, I think. I want to work with him, I respect him so much but I don't want to have a fight with him!"



> It's a move away from the deliberate, considered pace of *Metal Gear Solid* to fall in line with Platinum Games' trademark frenzied action. Yet Platinum is quick to speak up for the former gatekeepers of *Revengeance*, with its very own Atsushi Inaba saying: "It seems there are some who wish to imply Platinum Games was able to achieve what Kojima Productions could not – interviewers among them. This notion is spurious. Clearly, we have not yet produced any results in the world of *Metal Gear*. The artists at Kojima Productions gave their blood, sweat and tears to bring the *Metal Gear* saga to life. The gap is immense. Mr Kojima tossed his chips on our table, believing we could handle the task. In other words, he took a gamble. Many seem to think the change from *Metal Gear Solid: Rising* to *Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance* altered everything about the game, but this is simply not true. *Metal Gear Solid: Rising*'s concept excited us. We have love and respect for it, as we do the character of Raiden and the idea of freely cutting anything apart."

So there you have it. A rebirth, a reboot, a rescue operation or perhaps all three. Regardless of how it's seen, *Metal Gear* is back. It's faster. It's louder. It's not Solid any more but is it better? Hopefully it won't take another two years of silence to find out... ☒



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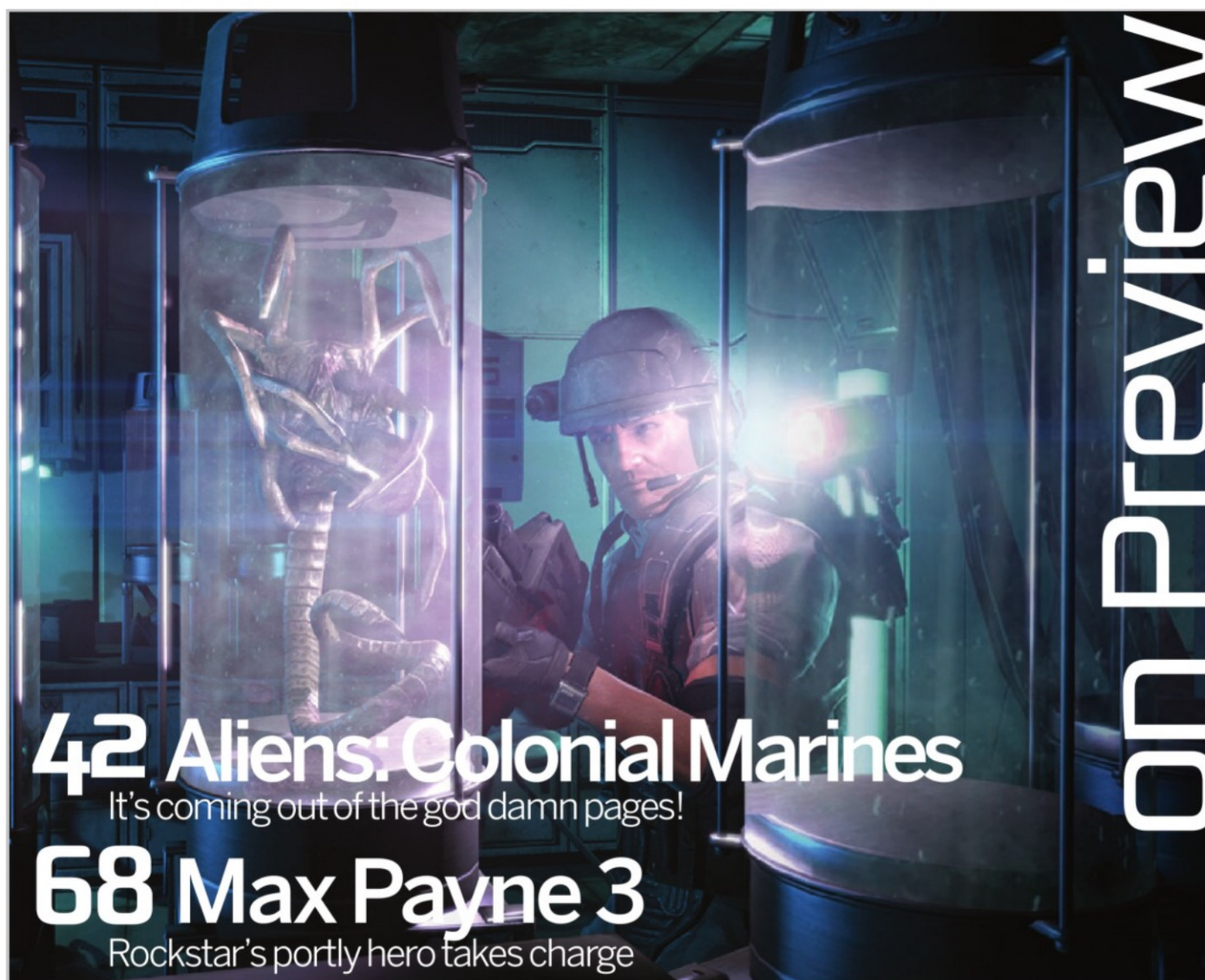




# PLAY Preview 点検

Playing bad games so you don't have to

Including: Aliens: Colonial Marines not up to Gearbox standards? /// BioShock Infinite exclusive interview /// The Last Of Us = Drake meets zombies?



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It's coming out of the god damn pages!

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Rockstar's portly hero takes charge

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Reinvented and going well

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Robots that turn into dinosaurs

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Looks surprisingly good

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If you want Fable on PS3...

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The Average Spider-Man

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Worthy of the Resiname?

### 59 ASURA'S WRATH PS3

The angriest man in gaming

### 60 WIPEOUT 2048 PSV

The fastest game on PS Vita

### 62 NINJA GAIDEN SIGMA PLUS PSV

Ultraviolence comes to Vita

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Strange, eccentric, weird, cool

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You can find us avoiding work at facebook.com/PlayMagUK, shhhh



YouTube

Lots of trailers that may or may not feature dubstep at youtube.com/PlayMagUK



Play blog

Home of our blogs and opinions, check in at play-mag.co.uk



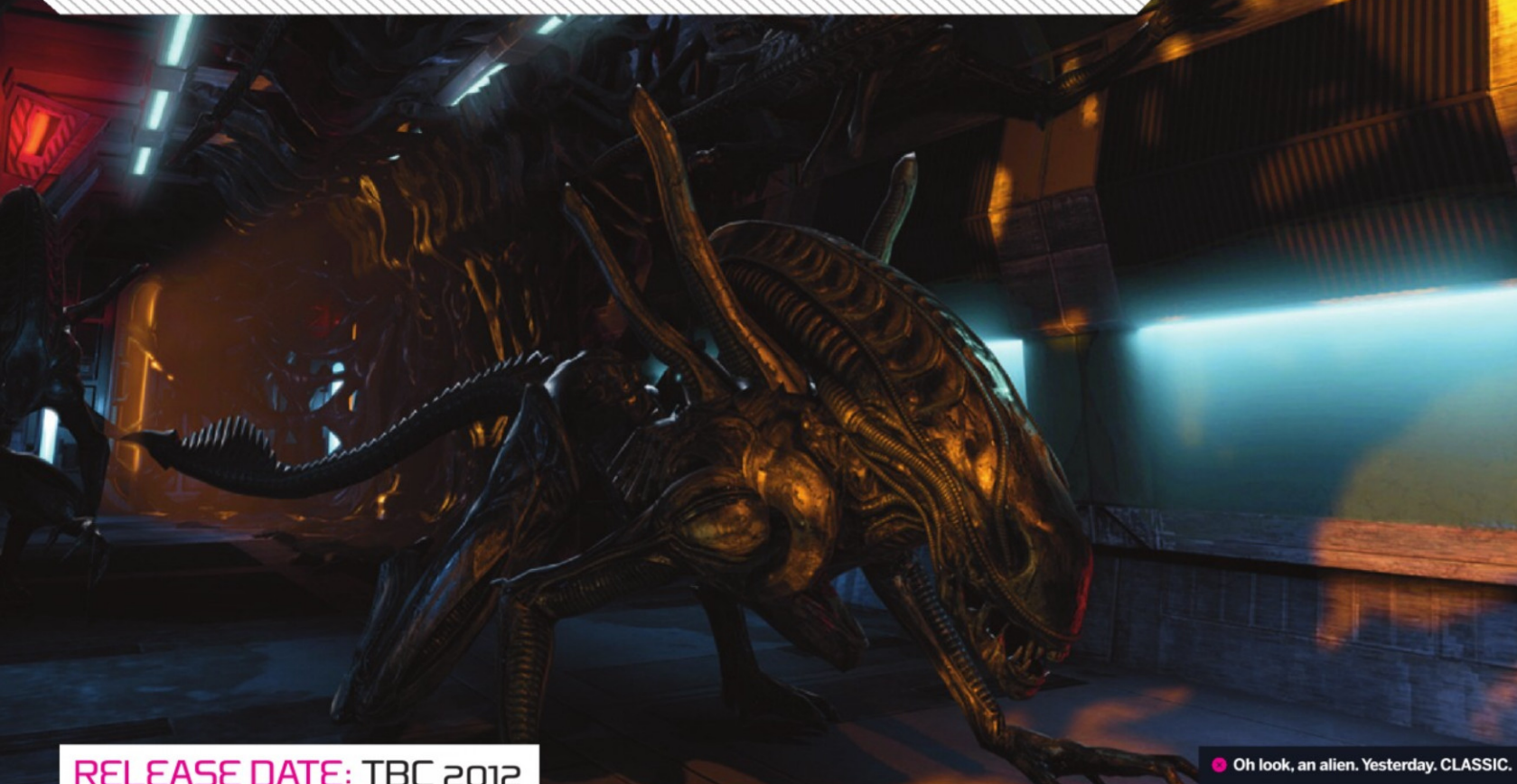
Twitter

Ridiculous giveaways and insane rambling at twitter.com/PlayMag\_UK



# PS3 PREVIEWS

The games that will shape the future of PlayStation



RELEASE DATE: TBC 2012

Oh look, an alien. Yesterday. CLASSIC.

## Aliens: Colonial Marines

'We've got a bad feeling about this...'

PS3

*Aliens: Colonial Marines* is causing a bit of concern in the Play office, and in truth has been doing so for quite some time. Mention the title to any of the assembled staff, most of them already at breaking point from too many deadlines, and the best response you can hope for is a pained 'hmmmm'. The worst is a full-blown meltdown, replete with senseless babbling and unrestrained crying.

Why? Well we're worried that it might turn out, after being in development for a thousand years, to be utterly, back-breakingly mediocre. The signs aren't particularly good so far: the E3 showing wowed precisely no one with its mixture of tired genre staples and very little in the way of teamwork. This is *Aliens*, people: there's no messing around. It's got to be great or it's going to be nothing, rightly or wrongly.

Hence our trepidation. There's the stunning lack of excitement found in what we've seen of the game so far. It's all very genero-FPS: go here, do that, shoot-bang, canned scare, 'oh look, here comes a big alien'. It feels like a procession rather than the heart-explodingly tense experience it should be.

Where the blame lies for this we can't be sure, but given Gearbox's experience in four-player co-op games (it created *Borderlands* and its upcoming sequel after all) we can only think that it's the licence itself that is constraining the developer. The E3 demo was an exercise in tedium, as Gearbox tried so hard to get every iconic element of the movie in there and succeeded only in reminding us that this has all been done better, and over a decade ago to boot, in *AVP* on PC.

That game had a terrifying atmosphere based around the constant feeling that you were

going to die, and that death could come at any moment. It felt like the game had a pathological desire to end your existence: facehuggers could kill you in an instant, aliens swarmed endlessly and you were often lost and groping in the dark to find your way to safety. Oh, and there were no in-mission saves because screw you.

Compare and contrast that with what we've seen of *Colonial Marines*. Sentry guns? Check. Aliens bursting through barricades? Check. Frightening linearity? Check. Polished to perfection graphics that don't convey anywhere near the amount of tension as a 12-year-old PC game? Check. Tedious-looking, rote shooting? Check. It's just not looking very inspiring at all.

At least some of this can be attributed to overfamiliarity: the movie it's based on practically wrote the manual for FPSs, and

over time every developer in existence, from *Doom* developer id to Gearbox itself, have diluted the raw power of Syd Mead's excellent design and James Cameron's urgent direction. We've all seen guns with digital ammo counters, motion scanners and wise-cracking marines in armour before, what feels like tens of thousands of times. This isn't Gearbox's fault, of course, but it's a similar situation to what happened with THQ's *Warhammer 40,000: Space Marine* may have popularised the power armour vibe that was ruthlessly ripped off, but by the time the game came out all people could see was what looked like a clone of other games.

So with familiarity breeding contempt the action has to be better than what we've been shown so far. Gearbox is a talented developer, but there's a danger that by showing *too much* love for the series, by sticking to the formula too much will see this fail to be the *Aliens* game we all dreamed of. And that would be a crying shame. >

Gearbox is developing *Aliens: Colonial Marines*. Check out [www.sega.co.uk/aliencolonialmarines](http://www.sega.co.uk/aliencolonialmarines) for more details.

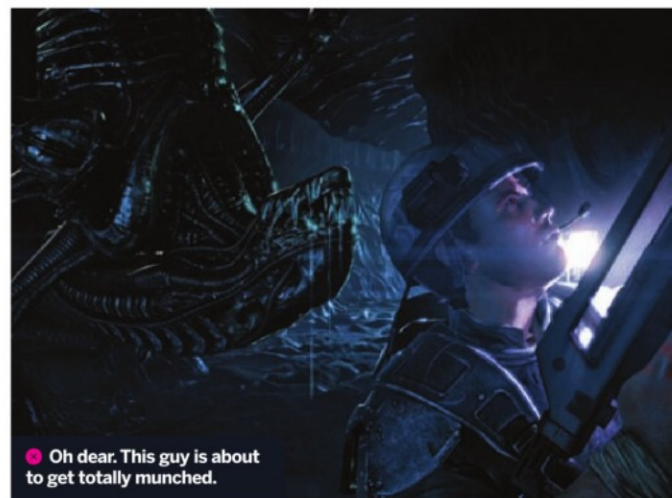
### WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- The setting is re-created well...
- The weapons are suitably authentic.
- ...but feels a bit 'plastic'.
- But overall we're just not sure. Prove us wrong, Gearbox.

### READ ME

Gearbox is promising a lot of fan service with *Aliens: Colonial Marines*, which should at least give uber-fans something to debate over in the forums.





## BENDING THE RULES

Wait, this doesn't make any sense

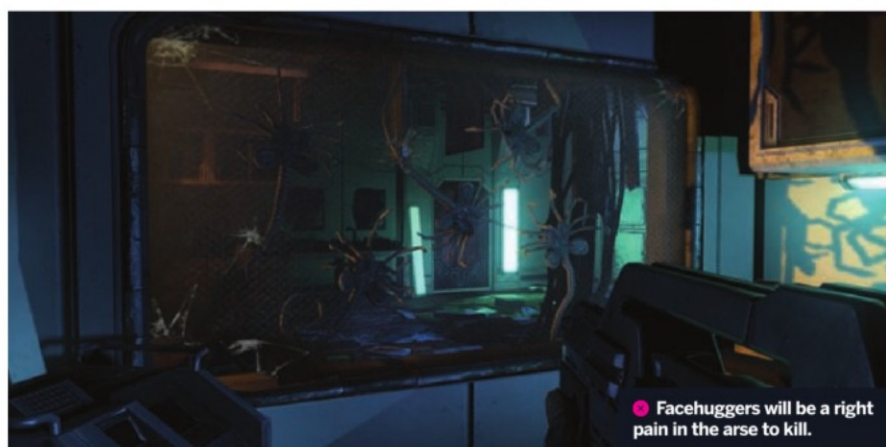
**GEARBOX HAS STRIVED** for authenticity with *Aliens: Colonial Marines*, but one pretty major plot point – ie the setting for the entire game – has inexplicably been brushed over without a second thought and it's driving us crazy. The setup for the game is that you play as a squad of marines going back to LV-426, exploring the famous locales from the movies. There's only one small problem with this, and that is that the entire reason the marines in the movie don't just hole up for the 17-day rescue period is that the planet's atmosphere processor is going to explode, effectively nuking everything. Which means that when it goes off at the movie's climax, there's nothing there any more. We can't wait to see how this is explained.



# PREVIEW



● Acid blood won't be as brutal as in the films, so shoot it. NOW.



● Facehuggers will be a right pain in the arse to kill.



● Set up a turret, then back off from the door. Easy now.





# WE LEARNED A LOT FROM BORDERLANDS AND BROTHERS IN ARMS



**BRIAN MARTEL**  
Gearbox co-founder

*Aliens: Colonial Marines* has been in development for what seems like a thousand years, but this year it will finally hit shelves. **Play** sat down for a chat with Gearbox Software co-founder Brian Martel to discuss one of 2012's most anticipated games

**How weird is it to be making a game based on the film that influenced the majority of games out there?**

It's amazing. Like you said, you can look all over our industry and see where *Aliens* has influenced us. To be able to work on the original franchise is an honour.

**Is it liberating creating a game based on the *Aliens* franchise in that some of the design work is already in place and people are aware of the IP?**

It is liberating in a sense, but there are also new constraints that we need to account for. For example, it's nice to know what a pulse rifle is because we don't have to come up with a super awesome weapon since one was already provided for us. Likewise, we know what a pulse rifle is *not*, so we're not able to adjust too much without straying from the canon that we and all of the fans love.

**Everyone remembers the dialogue and the one-liners from *Aliens*. Does that put you under pressure to come up with your own one-liners for *Colonial Marines*?**

We have a lot of witty people at Gearbox, so coming up with clever one-liners isn't a problem. We do want those one-liners to come at appropriate times, though. Marines have a kind of amusingly aggressive camaraderie like you see in the movie, but they're also trained professionals who take combat seriously.

**Out of all the games Gearbox has worked on to date, what experience has proved most valuable with developing *Aliens: Colonial Marines*?**

All past and present experience with other titles is valuable in some form or fashion. We learned a lot about weapons and co-op from the experience with *Borderlands*. We learned a lot about military life and verbiage from *Brothers In Arms*. We learned how to work within existing franchises during our past experience with *Half-Life* and *Nightfire*.

*We're spending a lot of time going over different ways for the acid blood to work*

**You've got *Aliens: Colonial Marines*, you've got *Borderlands 2*, you've got *Brothers In Arms: Furious 4*. How do you work on three games at the same time?**

We've got a large group of talented people who are passionate about different kinds of things. Having multiple things to work on is actually great, as it allows people to move between different things and stay fresh.

**A fan-service question now! One of the characters in *Aliens: Colonial Marines* is Weirzbowski and a Weirzbowski was also seen being dragged away in *Aliens*. Is it the same character or is the name just a coincidence?**

We actually did have a Weirzbowski character at one point during development, but as our cast of marines grew, we ended up not really having room for him. You've seen Cruz and a few other marines in the demo, but we have a really good cast of characters that we'll be showing off soon.

**Will there be a marines versus aliens multiplayer mode?**

We're not specifically talking about multiplayer too much at the moment, but you can imagine that it would be pretty cool if players had the opportunity to step into the role of a xeno.

**Will acid spray out and harm players when xenomorphs are shot from close range?**

The acid spray is interesting because it's a part of the franchise that everyone remembers, but it would be absolutely

brutal for the player to have it behave exactly as it did in the films. We're spending a lot of time going over different ways for the acid blood to work, so it's not something we're neglecting.

**One of the new xenomorph types is the Crusher Alien. What other xenomorph types can we expect? One of the original screenplays for *Alien 3* by David Twohy featured a Spike Alien and Alien chameleon, will those ideas be used?**

We've got quite a few types of xenos, some you've seen before and some you've not. Not to get too specific, but you'll see some really cool variations going forward.

**Finally, what's the one question you have been asked most about *Aliens: Colonial Marines*?**

We hear a lot of questions about how we'll handle different key elements of the franchise. *Aliens* is a franchise that means a lot to a lot of people, so we tend to get a lot of questions about franchise elements that people haven't seen yet. ☒



# PREVIEW



● Yes, it's a young girl with a gun. Calm down, *Daily Mail*.



## CONJECT-O-TRON 9000

Because it's time to speculate

**AT THE TIME** of writing details are thin on the ground, but that can't stop us from speculating. Will *The Last Of Us* involve co-op play, with one player taking the role of each of the characters? Will it be pure single-player? There's clearly still an audience for a well-crafted, offline experience as both *Uncharted* and *Enslaved* proved (admittedly ignoring *Uncharted 2* and *3*'s multiplayer). And just who is the main, player character? Will we see the ability to switch who is under control, or will we see the rather interesting move to make a teenage girl the lead character in a major Western release? We shall see.



● Images like this bring up thoughts of *I Am Legend*.



● We're less interested in the action, more in the survival aspect.

RELEASE DATE: TBC 2012

# The Last Of Us

## Fungus the Bogeyman

PS3

On paper it's even better than we expected: the combined talents of Naughty Dog's developers, a couple of the top bods from *Uncharted 2* (Neil Druckmann and Bruce Straley), and the extra, rogue element in the shape of ex-Ninja Theory and *Enslaved* lead designer Mark Richard Davies, all working together. But on what? Why, a post-apocalyptic, character-driven and storyline-heavy action-survival game, of course.

Details are still thin on the ground, but it's clear to see that the world of *The Last Of Us* has gone done a wrong 'un. Nature has had its way with the urban centres built by man, reclaiming the planet and leaving a scene not too dissimilar from the aforementioned *Enslaved*. It seems that most people in the world are not doing too well on the whole 'living' thing, with many dead and those technically alive being what appears to be controlled by, or driven feral by, something growing on and inside them.

Earlier teaser trailers pointed to the *Cordyceps* genus of fungi, which avid BBC nature documentary viewers will know as 'the fungus that turns ants into mind-controlled zombies'. Apply this thinking to a fungus that attacks humans and

you've got yourself the recipe for some decent, rather (utterly) terrifying horror.

And this fact has been evidenced in what we've seen so far, with the two main characters forced to escape the screeching, bulbous-faced human presumably infected with the fungal offspring of whatever created this global pandemic. But it won't just be players facing off against these zombie-ish types – after all, what would a post-apocalyptic quest for survival be without having to battle others as desperate as you for supplies, shelter and safety? Nothing, that's what. Though admittedly that would likely raise some rather furious reportage from the tabloids if *The Last Of Us* sees a teenage girl killing non-fungal people (note to tabloids: this is conjecture, it is not confirmed as of yet).

Speculation erupted in the wake of the trailer to try to nail down just who it was playing the two non-freakish zombie things ('humans'). Early guesses stabbed at the obvious – Nolan North – and the 'she looks a bit like her' – Ellen Page. Both wrong. The teenage Ellie is played by Ashley Johnson of *Ben 10*, *The Killing* and *King Of The Hill* fame. The gruff-o mcbeardy Joel has the talents of Troy Baker behind

him – probably less of a household name than his compatriot, but one you're far more likely to have heard in videogames. His credits stretch to titles such as Alec Mason in *Red Faction Guerrilla*, Snow of *Final Fantasy XIII*, Booker DeWitt in *BioShock Infinite* and Two-Face in *Batman: Arkham City* – certainly not a bad resume by any stretch, though it would appear Mr Baker is entering Nolan North levels of ubiquity already. We can rest easy in the knowledge the voice acting – and we'd assume performance capture, what with this being Naughty Dog's thing – will be of a high calibre.

What remains to be seen is what *The Last Of Us* will do with the genre it is, according to Naughty Dog, set to 'define'. Will this be a beautiful, wonderfully produced and technically skilful jaunt into a world of in-game mechanics we've seen a thousand times before? Or will it be, as we hope, something genuinely worth getting excited about? The sort of thing we always hoped *Dead Island* would be? Time will tell, of course, but right now we're going to remain quietly excited about this one – Naughty Dog's pedigree won't let us be anything else.

**The Last Of Us** is being developed by Naughty Dog. Check out [www.lastofus.com](http://www.lastofus.com) for more details.

## WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- The talent behind *Uncharted 2* + *Enslaved* = we're excited.
- Zombies (ish) again, but an interesting take on the concept.

- You can never have too many post-apocalyptic worlds demanding survival.
- No Nolan North (we still love you, Noley-boy, we just need a break. It's not you it's us.)

## READ ME

If you'd like nightmares, watch the section on *Ophiocordyceps unilateralis* on the BBC show *Planet Earth*. It's both horrifying and very much real.





RELEASE DATE: FEBRUARY

## The Darkness II

Looking forward to one of the most interesting sequels of the year

PS3

*The Darkness II* is nearly here. Good, eh? No? Why not? What do you mean you haven't been following its progress? Call of what? Cry-huh? Sky-eh? Ah yes, yes, we see, you've got triple-A game syndrome, where only titles with stupendous marketing budgets get through your brain-gate and make themselves known to you.

Which is fair enough: you've got things to do, same as us. You can't know everything. Good job we're here then to tell you why this sequel, which looks completely different in art style and is made by a different developer than the first game, should be on your radar. Usually such sweeping changes would set off the patented **Play** turkey alert, but from having played *The Darkness II* we're confident it'll be a worthy successor to the fantastic original game.

### 1 BUILDING BETTER WORLDS

Well, some of it in any case. You might not have heard of Digital Extremes before but it's got an impressive back catalogue, creating multiple versions of the excellent *Unreal Tournament* franchise for Epic on PC back in the early to mid-2000s. If you're not a tiresome PC player, however (like our art editor Andy), you're probably more likely to have played the company's wares if you picked up *BioShock 2*. Digital Extremes crafted that game's fascinating multiplayer component that tied into the main story in a very satisfying way, and we're hoping that the same can be said for *The Darkness II*'s co-op modes.



2

### THE 'ME' IN TEAM

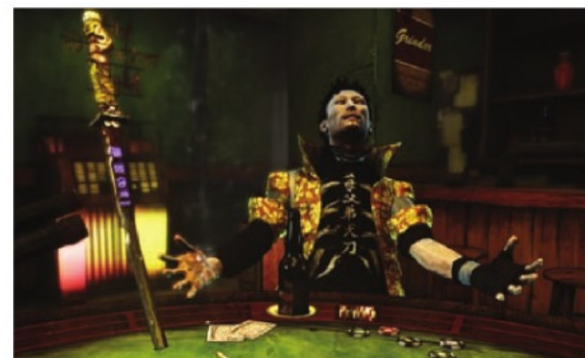
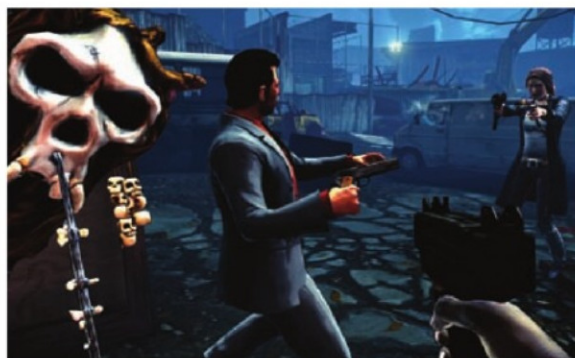
Rather than just incorporate a standard-issue deathmatch mode and be done with it Digital Extremes has opted to go down the co-op route, entitled Vendettas. A maximum of four players can team up, although the mode will be playable by a single player, and mostly takes the form of killhouses that need to be swept of enemies before a player can reach a goal. There's more to it than that in some instances, but it's not a complicated mode, and nor should it be: getting four players who actually are good at games to play in a lobby is hard enough without then having to marshal them through rules and controls.

### WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Vendettas mode looks like a nice addition...
- ...to an already appealing package.
- Although the characters are a bit stereotype-y.
- But we'll have to see how it pans out.

### READ ME

The art style that Digital Extremes has used for *The Darkness II* is called graphic noir, apparently. Don't call it cel-shaded. Ever. Not while they're around, at least.







3

## FIVE POINTS

### PARALLEL LINES

As well as having its own self-contained story and characters for players to blast through, Vendettas also overlaps with Jackie's story at certain points. In one instance you'll meet up with mobsters Vince and Johnny, who have a hand in the events of the main narrative, and no doubt there'll be other such similar moments hinging on important parts of the story. That said we doubt that this sort of crossover will be happening too often (as not to spoil the effect) but we're hoping for a level of weave that is similar to *GTA IV* and its episodes or *Half-Life* and *Opposing Force*.

Hey, we can but dream right?

### CLASS WAR

As it runs side by side with *The Darkness II*'s main story it wouldn't make a lot of sense for players to take charge of Jackie Estacado during Vendettas mode. Instead you get to choose between four differing personalities, each with different weapons and reasons for being involved in the plot.

JP DuMond is a doctor who wields a staff infused with the Darkness, able to summon black holes to defeat enemies. Shohanna is a Mossad agent. Her gun has Darkness properties and her special ability is channeling that power through said weapon. The last two wield melee weapons: Jimmy is a worryingly stereotypical Scot who throws an arcing hammer and can summon Darklings, and Inugami has a sword and can summon swarms.

4



5

### LEVEL-HEADED

As you've probably realised by now (and if you haven't, reading the rest of this magazine is the least of your troubles) *Call Of Duty 4* came out four years ago. Which means that every game ever has to have a levelling-up mechanic or the kids will get bored quick-sharp and return it to Gamestation for 'Online Murder-Kill 2' before you can say 'Online Pass'.

Vendettas follows this strategy, but from what we've seen it doesn't look like it's going to dominate proceedings – no one's going to rage quit over people boosting or anything – but we suppose it adds an extra angle to the experience that it might not previously have had.

### MEET THE TEAM

Here's the guys (and girl) you'll be playing as in Vendettas mode



With Inugami and his sword, the real question is whether the game's melee combat holds up to scrutiny.

Next Digital Extremes will tell us Jimmy here is tight with money.

Check out the Uzi. Good call.

Someone should tell her that *The Matrix* was a long time ago.







RELEASE DATE: TBC 2012

# Transformers: Fall Of Cybertron

The last one was rubbish. This one probably won't be

PS3

What is *Fall Of Cybertron* about? Judging by the new trailer – which shows precisely zero gameplay and as such is almost worthless – it seems to be about a long-hidden romance between Bumblebee and Optimus Prime. Look at the way they gaze at each other, as Prime holds Bumblebee in his arms for no discernible reason. Powerful.

Also, it's got robot dinosaurs in it now, which, as everyone knows, is only one peg below owning your own dinosaur on the awesome scale. What this robot T-Rex is

going to be getting up to, we don't know. **Play's** resident *Transformers* expert tells us that his name is Grimlock, and he's meant to be a bit of a badass. Maybe he's involved in a love triangle with Prime and Bee? Maybe. Maybe.

What we do know is that the game is a direct sequel to 2010's quite good *War For Cybertron*, which in turn was followed by the terrible movie tie-in *Dark Of The Moon*. Both were third-person shooters with added robots (with that ultra-satisfying transformation cue as well). One, however, was

much superior to the other: while *War For Cybertron* was actually quite well designed with regards to the levels and how and when you used your various forms, *Dark Of The Moon* felt rushed out of the door to coincide with the film, and as such it had to bear some resemblance to that tosh, resulting in the game itself being, well, tosh.

We hope this is more like the former than the latter: developer High Moon has shown that it can create good games out of the licence when it's calling the shots. With *War For Cybertron* taking its cues from the original toy line instead of Bay's movies (and throwing Dinobots in for good measure), we're reasonably confident this will be a solid blaster.

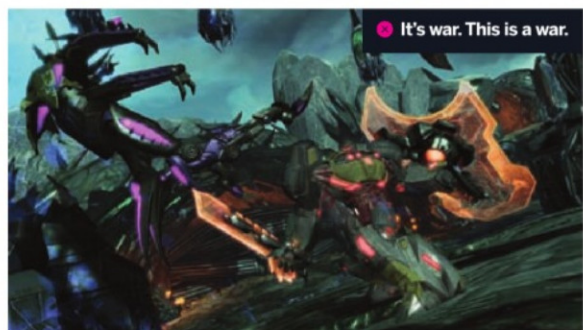
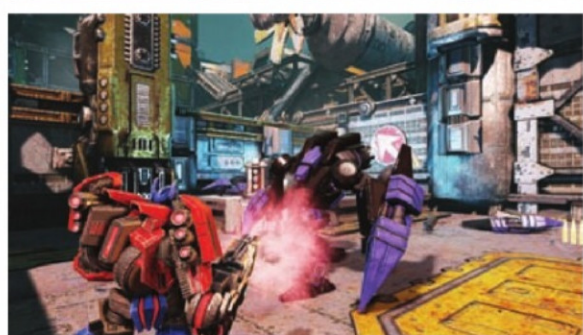
**High Moon** also developed the quite-good *Bourne Conspiracy*. Check it out at [www.highmoonstudios.com](http://www.highmoonstudios.com)

## WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

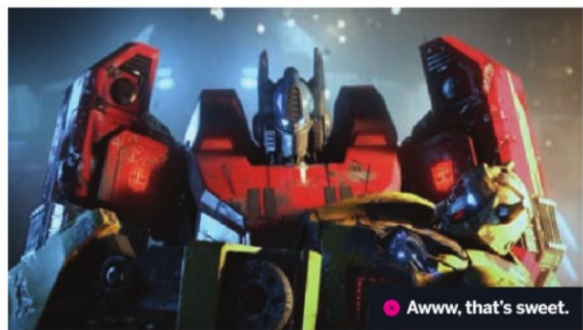
- ❑ It's not a movie tie-in.
- ❑ It's not a movie tie-in.
- ❑ It's not a movie tie-in.
- ❑ You get it by now.

## READ ME

If you know your *Transformers*, then you'll be aware that the events of this game are what forces the Autobots to come to Earth. If you didn't, then well you know now, right?



It's war. This is a war.



Awww, that's sweet.

## COD IN DISGUISE

Change the multiplayer, High Moon

AS MUCH AS we like *Call Of Duty* multiplayer, we don't really want to play variations of it in games that aren't *COD*. The last *Transformers* game pretty much did this exactly, replacing men with robots. High Moon needs to freshen things up a bit: how about a mode where you play as Michael Bay casting talentless actors for the next movie. No? Okay.



## LEG UP

1

In real life losing your legs is the equivalent of accidentally deleting a *Skyrim* save: mentally devastating, as well as physically. For *NeverDead* star Bryce Boltzmann it's just Tuesday: he can recover his lost limbs by rolling over them or, if a certain gauge is full, he can simply sprout new legs and arms by pressing . Lucky, eh?

It's an interesting concept, and adds a lot of strategy to the game's combat. Certain enemies can render you as little more than a rolling head in one swift attack, so Bryce constantly has to be on the move. It gives the familiar combat a panicked edge as you desperately try to become whole again.

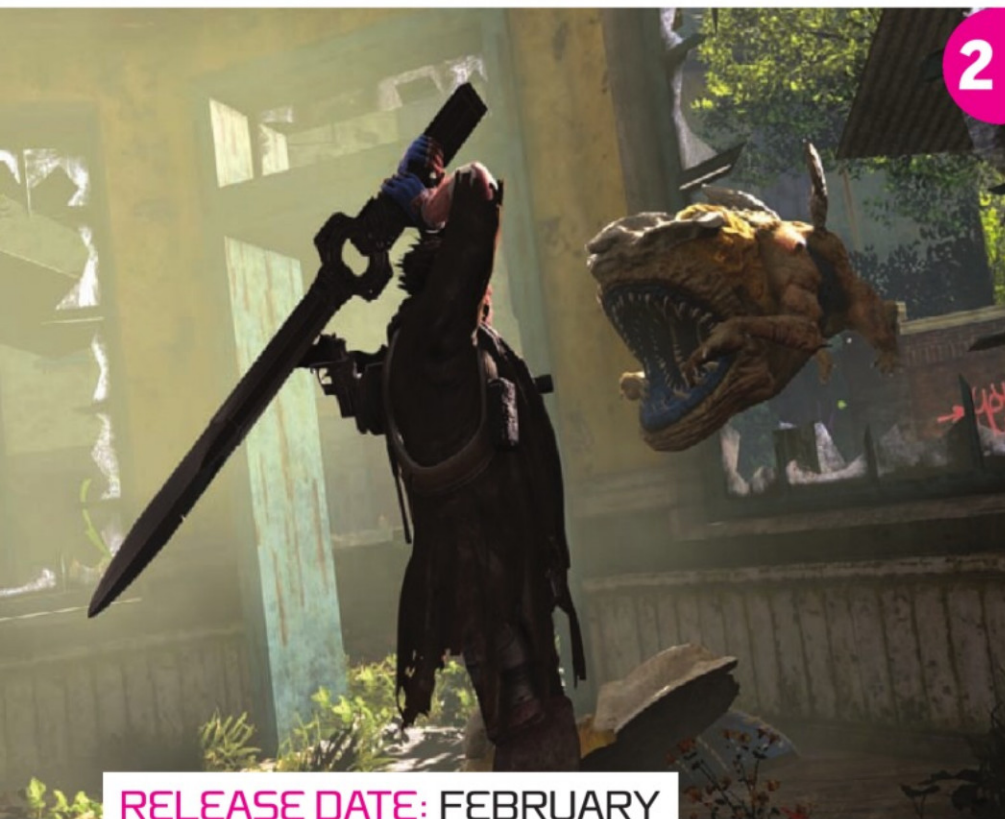


2

## SWORD DE FORCE

Although Bryce's sword and gun combo isn't anything new in the world of action games – it is the classic *DMC* setup, after all – there's at least a tiny bit of strategy to using the oversized butterfly blade that Bryce lugs around. Some enemies can only be killed using the sword, with the angle of the attack controlled by pushing the right analogue stick in a certain direction.

Mindless slashing can and will kill many of your foes, but rhythmically moving the stick, timing the next slash as the current one ends, will produce much more refined – and powerful – results. It's easy to devolve into a wild slashing frenzy, especially when limb-tearing enemies get up close and personal, but a little practice and you'll be duelling like a pro.



RELEASE DATE: FEBRUARY

## NeverDead

Where's your head at? It's been eaten. Sorry

PS3

As you probably know but don't recall because your brain has been blasted into cinders by all-night *Call Of Duty* marathons, *NeverDead* is an upcoming action game from Rebellion, who used to make really good games, then made a load of awful ones, and now, with this, seems to be back on an upward swing.

On the surface it's a standard hack-'n'-slasher, but it has a fine gimmick: mainly that you're immortal, and can lose your limbs and head at any time. Essentially, if this was made by Suda51 then the sort of people who read **games™** would be getting stupidly excited about it.

Visit [www.konami.com/officialsites/neverdead/home.php](http://www.konami.com/officialsites/neverdead/home.php) for more details.

3

## WORLDWIDE RIDGEING

Although Bryce is essentially immortal, the game will end if partner Arcadia is killed, he can still technically die. If you lose your head (which is a frighteningly frequent occurrence) then you've got to scramble back to your body before it gets eaten by one of the guys (above).

Fail to make it in time and you'll be gobbled up and treated to an image of Bryce's head in the belly of the beast.

From there you get one chance of escape – via a precision mini-game that sees players trying to match up two fast-moving sliders. Fail to do so and it's game over.







RELEASE DATE: TBC 2012

## BioShock Infinite

A rather unfair advantage, we'd say.

One of the most anticipated titles of 2012, *BioShock Infinite* has a lot to live up to. **Play** caught up with art director Nate Wells to see how the team is coping

PS3

**Naughty Dog's creative director recently criticised stories in videogames. He has a point. Irrational's game stories are generally lauded, however: what do you do differently?**

I can't endorse one approach or another. We just do what we do. I think there's some key elements that we discerned over the years, allowing the player to self drive the story, find their own place in it. A lot of it is the environment. The depth and complexity and attention given to the environment so that it feels like a real place. We feel that's really essential to draw you in.

One of the real challenges we're taking on this time is you and Elizabeth, developing that relationship and making that a relationship that the player cares about deeply.

**How do you make sure the player doesn't end up resenting (NPC ally) Elizabeth?**

We set rules for ourselves. Look, everybody hates escort missions, quests. When you add a friendly

character you run the risk, based on how you deal with their systems so that they're not a burden. That was the first thing we took on. Then when they're not a burden there's all kinds of systems you can leverage to make them a real asset to you, someone you want around. The narrative part that Elizabeth provides, we think, is huge, we've got a really cool story that unfolds in that interaction between the player and Elizabeth, so you want her around for that.

The other thing is that Elizabeth has a very unique set of specific gameplay powers that the player has a choice in using. It enables them to change their tactical environment and the combat situation in front of them. In the latest *Infinite* trailer she throws you a weapon.

**There's no Big Daddy, no Rapture, not a lot of *BioShock*'s signature 'look' in *Infinite*. How do you communicate that this is a real *BioShock* game, and how many death threats did you receive from upper management?**

We actually got their blessing, I think they trust us with this stuff. You can't just set out with a laundry list and say this is or this isn't a *BioShock* game as you're putting in features. It's very iterative and interpretive, and you're feeling your way through the development. Without sounding too spiritual about it it's the exact same people who made the previous game, which is a huge thing: the personalities, inclinations, the things that interest us, we bring that all to bear on a *BioShock* title. For me as an art director it's all about the attention paid to the environment. Which I feel is the underpinning. This is every bit a *BioShock* game as [the previous instalments were].

**On NPC interaction: we assume it's not going to be all shooting. How much of *BioShock Infinite* do you think will be spent with NPCs that are on your side, or at least support your cause?**

Again, our player finds himself trapped in the middle. You could say that everyone's a friend, everyone's

an enemy, depending on how you play it. But sure, you will be speaking to NPCs.

**In any discussion on *BioShock*, the environment is almost always mentioned first, and the combat second. Have you made any sweeping changes to the combat or improved what's there?**

I would say we've made some pretty sweeping changes in *BioShock Infinite*. You will be familiar with the vigour system, which is pretty similar to the Plasmid system in the way that it supports and augments weapon use. I think one of the challenges that we had moving forward from *BioShock* was complaints that the enemies were kind of samey. They had different powers, and some of them move in different ways or had a different size, but they were all relatively human.

So we went through and created new classes of AIs that move differently, fight differently, have different impacts on combat. Then you take all of that into consideration as well as the possibility of using skylines and being able to be down in a combat space and then swoop up above it and place yourself on a building, and then have to abandon that space to fight or pick up ammo.

*BioShock Infinite* is being developed by BioWare – check out [www.bioshockinfinite.com](http://www.bioshockinfinite.com) for more info.

### WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?



A true *BioShock* sequel...



Regardless of the new setting.



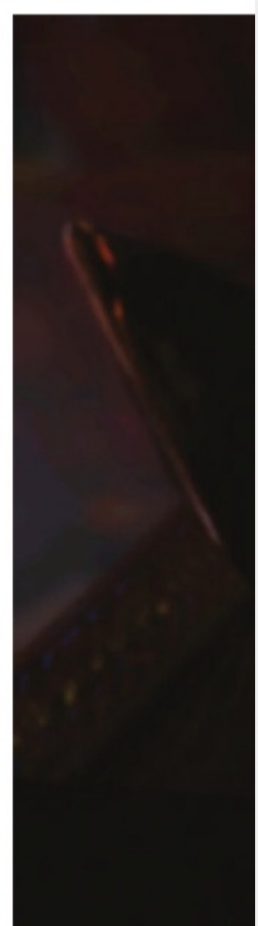
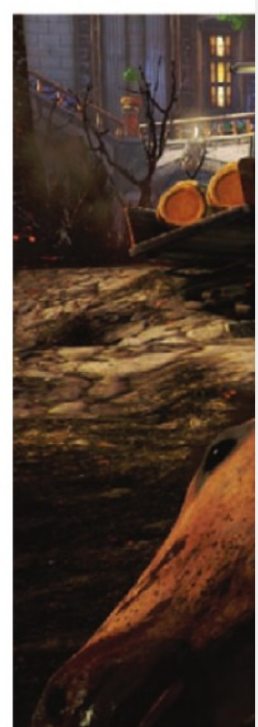
Elizabeth doesn't sound like a burden.



Which is a relief.

### READ ME

Ken Levine and company have made some of the best videogames ever. Expect *BioShock Infinite* to be up there at least.







Elizabeth had clearly done something to piss off Don Corleone.



Hardcore *Star Wars* fans: rejoice.



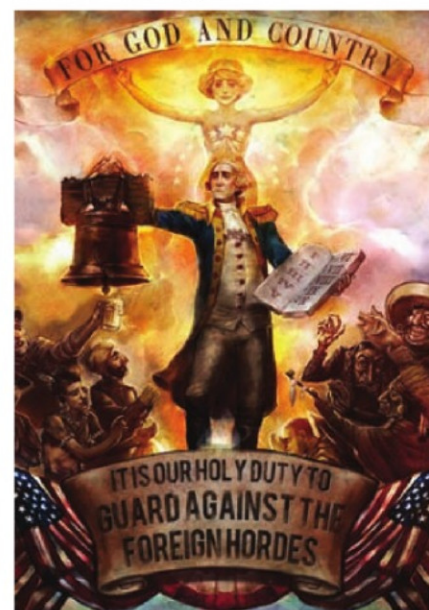
Ian dreams of having a statue like this of himself.



For all her powers, she's still vulnerable.

## THE WAITING GAME

Infinite is everywhere, yet we know nothing **DESPITE ALL OF** the fuss and hype surrounding *Infinite*, there's still so much we don't know. How prevalent is skyline combat? How do the inside areas differ from the outside segments we've seen? And will it have a rubbish end boss like the original?





# PREVIEW

## ✓ Name recognition

*Dishonored* sees players taking up the role of Corvo, who previously was apparently a bit of a legend in his capacity of bodyguard to the empress of Gristol. Like all good-uns in fantasy tales, however, he's soon carted off to prison after being caught up in a conspiracy by an evil Lord. It all sounds a bit like *Aladdin* to us, if *Aladdin* had guns and super powers, obviously, but at least it's not another space marine seam-athon. Which is something, believe us.



*Dishonored* is being developed by Arkane Studios. Check out [www.dishonored.com](http://www.dishonored.com) for the latest news, updates and screenshots.



RELEASE DATE: TBC 2012

# Dishonored



Deus a favour, get involved with this

## WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Stealth.
- Consequences.
- Interesting world.
- Industry legends on board.

## READ ME

We really can't emphasise this enough: if you haven't played *Deus Ex* yet, do it now. It'll run on any PC as long as it doesn't say 486 on it anywhere and is still better than its shinier little brother, *Human Revolution*.

## ✓ Power down

As well as being rather handy with a blade, Corvo also possesses a litany of supernatural powers with which to dispatch his foes. Granted, these might have played a big part in the credibility of his defence that he didn't kill anyone, but hey.

Anyway Corvo's abilities range from stopping time – classic – to possessing passing animals. The developer is insistent that no single ability will be overpowered and that creative combinations hold the key to victory. We'll be the judge of that, eh?

## ✓ Chaos theory

The mechanic that tracks all of *Dishonored*'s complicated moral, narrative and combative wrangling is dubbed Chaos, but Arkane Studios is hoping that it will be a little more subtle than the classic RPG-inspired good/bad morality systems. Instead your actions across all elements of the game will be fed into an algorithm that deduces how good or bad you've been throughout the game, not just at key points. It's an ambitious plan, but if it works it will be brilliant, lending weight to even the smallest decisions.

## ✓ Gristol-Grip

Yup, that's right. Corvo's adventure takes place in the world of Gristol, which is bound to promote sniggering from British games journalists, followed by plenty of 'Gristol Cities' puns.

But not us. We're more focused on Gristol's retro-future-industrial vibe, which as you can probably tell owes a big debt to *Half-Life 2* and *BioShock*. Not that *Dishonored* is short on pedigree itself: Harvey Smith of *Deus Ex* and *Thief* fame is on board, which immediately makes the game more exciting than most others. That's what happens when you make two of the most loved games ever we suppose: people expect big things of you.







## ✓ A whole new world

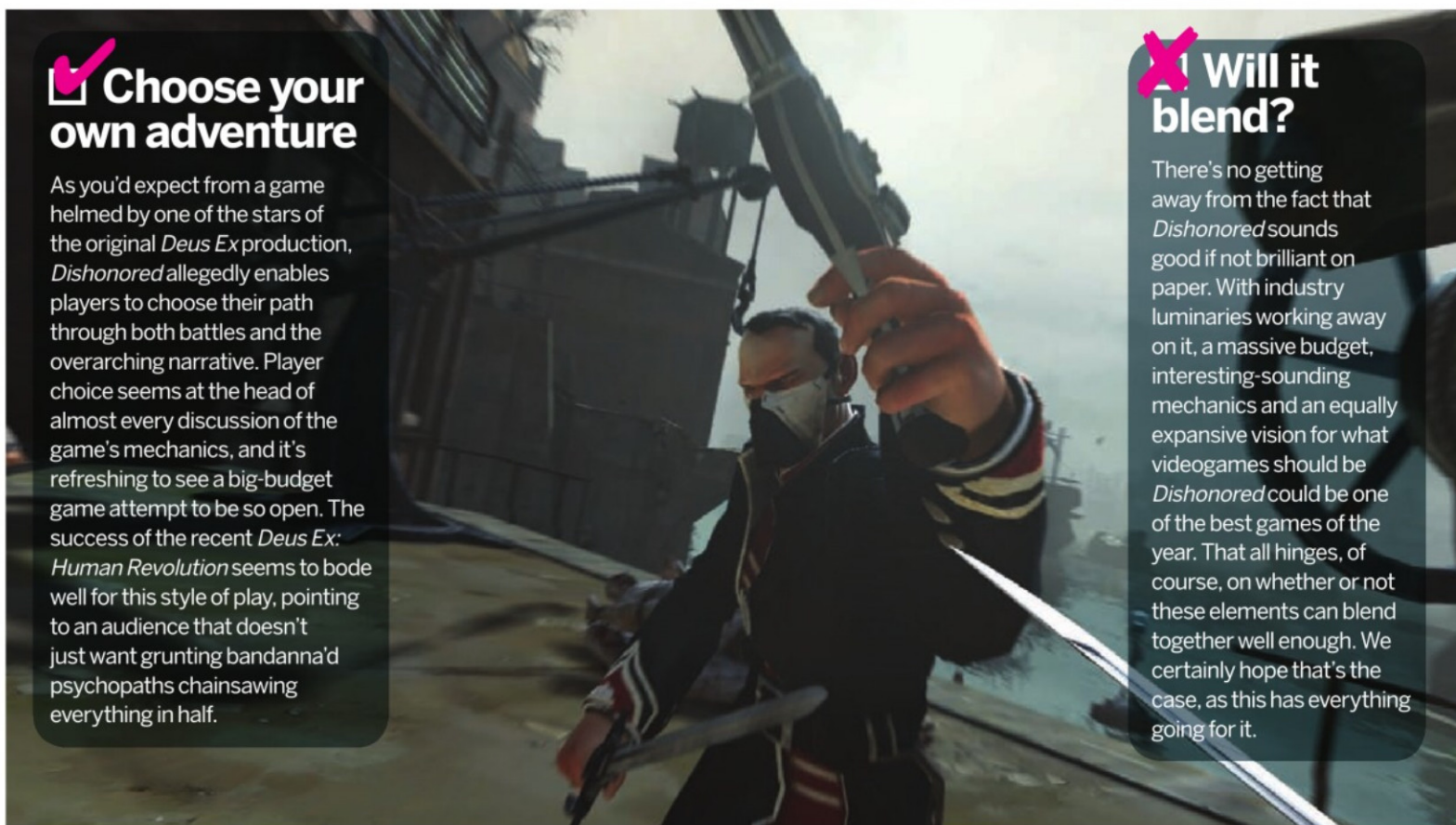
At its heart *Dishonored* is centred on assassinations, but it doesn't seem to have the same linearity of other games in the genre. Instead, the development team has stated that the world will change due to your actions. If you're the silent assassin type then don't expect many ripples, but if you're prone to explosive hits with plenty of collateral damage then bear in mind that the heat will be coming down far quicker.

We've not seen this mechanic in action, but if we destroy an enemy stronghold then it better stay exploded. That's all we ask for.



## ✓ Choose your own adventure

As you'd expect from a game helmed by one of the stars of the original *Deus Ex* production, *Dishonored* allegedly enables players to choose their path through both battles and the overarching narrative. Player choice seems at the head of almost every discussion of the game's mechanics, and it's refreshing to see a big-budget game attempt to be so open. The success of the recent *Deus Ex: Human Revolution* seems to bode well for this style of play, pointing to an audience that doesn't just want grunting bandanna'd psychopaths chainsawing everything in half.



## ✗ Will it blend?

There's no getting away from the fact that *Dishonored* sounds good if not brilliant on paper. With industry luminaries working away on it, a massive budget, interesting-sounding mechanics and an equally expansive vision for what videogames should be *Dishonored* could be one of the best games of the year. That all hinges, of course, on whether or not these elements can blend together well enough. We certainly hope that's the case, as this has everything going for it.



# PREVIEW



RELEASE DATE: FEBRUARY

# Kingdoms Of Amalur: Reckoning

The closest Peter Molyneux has come to PS3

PS3

We don't know what the rule is on mentioning 360 exclusives on these hallowed pages. How would you react? Say there was a game coming out on PS3 which happened to bear a lot of similarities to a famous Xbox 360 exclusive action-RPG series – would you want to drop us headfirst into pits of boiling tar? Because oh hey, guess what.

Not that *Kingdoms Of Amalur: Reckoning* can pretend to be all that offended. The short version of this preview is that *Kingdoms Of Amalur* is *Fable* minus the bad bits. At this point, we'd wrap up the preview and use a big screenshot to fill in the rest of the space on the page but you might not be familiar with *Fable*, seeing as it only ever graced The Other Console. On go on then, we'll explain. Like *Fable*, this is an RPG with open areas tied together by linear routes, painted by bright, bold colours sloshed around and NPCs with names like Erik The Swift Woodthrift (possibly made up) to give you quests.

What the two series share is that they're quietly powered by

instant gratification. Rather than pick spells from a menu and politely wait your turn to cast them, combat is conducted via instant strikes, evading, blocking, spell-casting and the like all happening as you tap the relevant buttons. Only the odd status effect floating up during combat and pompous line of dialogue reminds you that this is an RPG at its core.

The instant gratification also comes from the burning desire to keep improving, through the items you pick up. You can compare anything you pick up, from armour to weapons, to what you currently own. You quickly turn from sane gamer into loot addict, desperately trying to scratch that new itch. Yet perhaps the most distinct difference between the two is that *Fable* is a series notorious for over-promising and under-delivering. *Kingdoms Of Amalur*, however, looks like it'll be doing the opposite. Boom! Headshot. Now for the angry emails telling us off for stoking console wars again...

**Kingdoms Of Amalur: Reckoning** is being developed by 38 Studios. Check out the website at [38studios.com](http://38studios.com)

## WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- It's *Fable*! On PlayStation 3! Without the bad bits!
- Artwork overseen by Todd McFarlane of *Spawn* fame.
- Except it's not *Fable*. Hence the different title.
- Peter Molyneux is not involved. At all.

## READ ME

Curt Schilling, head of the studio, is actually a former baseball player who used to be starting pitcher for the Boston Red Sox. So now you know.



IN-DEPTH



*Kingdoms Of Amalur* is looking very similar to Xbox 360-exclusive *Fable* but will be much, much better. Obviously.

Is this supposed to be a warning shot? Or warning slam or whatever. It's not even close. Maybe he saw a cockroach.



## PICK YOUR POISON

Choices, choices, choices

**YOU BEGIN KINGDOMS** *Of Amalur* as a corpse (literally) before being brought back to life as a blank slate. There are four playable races, three class trees and 22 abilities per tree to work through, so there are plenty of ways to play. While the combat is mostly the same – spam your strongest attack whenever available – the different classes all have different considerations to work with (magic, axes, dual-wielding and so on).







RELEASE DATE: SUMMER 2012

# The Amazing Spider-Man

Finally getting the message

PS3

Remember *Spider-Man 2* on PS2? It was the rarest of beasts: both a good *Spider-Man* game and a good movie tie-in. Mental. Since then Activision has tried – and failed on many counts – to make a true successor. The last game, *Spider-Man: Edge Of Time*, was terrible, scoring a meagre 38% when it was reviewed. Not great, we're sure you'll agree.

We can't say for certain that this new entry will finally deliver the goods, but it's got to be better than the last effort. Why? Free-form web swinging through the streets of New York, that's why. It's what made *Spider-Man 2* the game it was and it looks like it's returning here, which makes us very happy indeed.

The game takes place after the events of the movie of the same name it's tying into, forming an epilogue to those events, as Activision has chosen to describe it, although it's not exactly sure just how faithful it will be to the movie's continuity.

Which isn't too much of a problem: slavishly following the narrative of a feature film has rarely worked out for tie-in videogames. No, what's worrying is that rather than just have you swinging through the streets, blissful grin on your face, they've decided to throw robots in there: loads and loads of robots, each and every one of them as plain looking as possible. Do we want robots in *Spider-Man*? No we do not.

Oh, and there's a hatful of quick-time events in there as well. Why, we can't be sure. We do know, however, that their inclusion has sounded alarm bells around the office, along with the fear that if anyone's going to mess up *Spider-Man* it's going to be these guys.

Not that we want them to, of course. Come on, Beenox, give us the *Spider-Man* game we all want.

Beenox also developed the terrible *Spider-Man: Edge Of Time*. Check out the website at [www.beenox.com/en](http://www.beenox.com/en)

## CHANGING THE FORMULA

Here's some excellent ideas for the game, Beenox

**AS MUCH AS** we love swinging through the streets of New York, punching over cars and beating up bad guys, surely there's room in a *Spider-Man* game to explore the adventures of one Peter Parker? How about a level where you have to stand in front of your boss and get shouted at for two hours? Or have to go to school and avoid New York's real menace: student cliques?



Just hanging out, as usual.

Stop being so dramatic, Spidey.

## WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Could be like *Spider-Man 2*.
- Free-form web swinging.
- Which is A Very Good Thing.
- Er, robots?

## READ ME

*The Amazing Spider-Man* is being written by Hollywood screenwriter Seamus Kevin Fahey, who wrote for the modern day version of *Battlestar Galactica*.



# PREVIEW



1

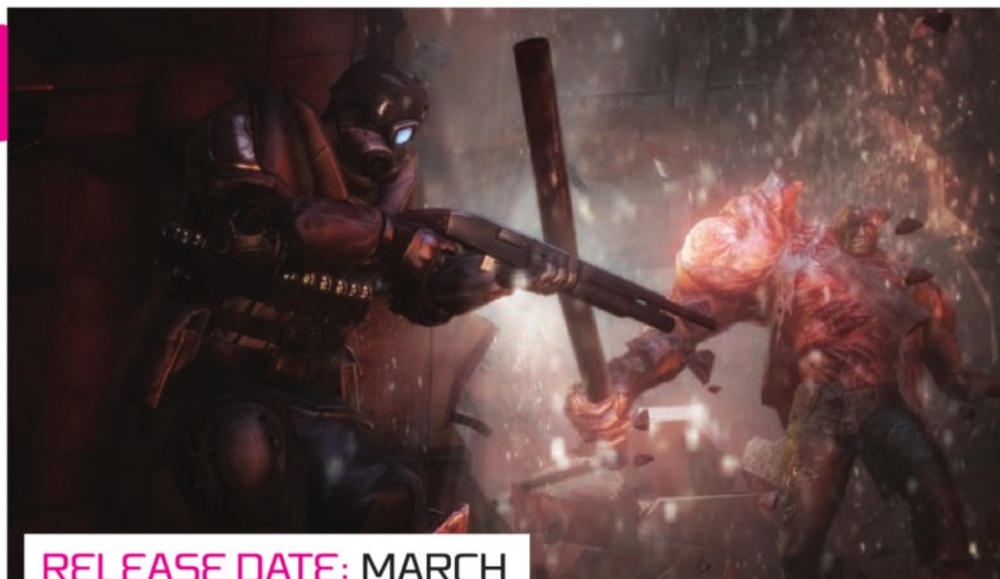
## WE'RE NOT IMPRESSED

Let's push beyond the new *Resident Evil*'s lack of *Resi* feel and tell you about how it plays instead: like you'd expect – run-'n'-gun, cover-based, team-mates with unique powers, customisable loadouts. But with a few unique, interesting elements, like how you can be infected by zombies and the bleedout mechanic: the former can be cured with anti-viral spray, or you can simply be left to turn into the undead before watching helplessly as your character attacks former friends; the latter is actually a decent strategic tactic, allowing players to lure zombies towards a single, injured enemy. Beyond these two elements, though, it really is quite interchangeable with many other games as an experience.

## CLASSLESS CLASSES

Players choose one character and are accompanied by three other AI troopers, choosing from the six we will call (because it's what they're called) Vector, Spectre, Four Eyes, Lupo, Beltway and... sigh... Bertha. Each character has a different speciality – for example, Vector is recon and can cloak. But what we played showed a game of four individuals barely working together, not using powers for anything but personal reasons and waiting for team-mates to turn into zombies before cutting them down in a hail of gunfire. We haven't been able to try the game how it should be played, in multiplayer. For all of our teeth-gnashing, it could prove to be a very different beast online.

2



RELEASE DATE: MARCH

# Resident Evil: Operation Raccoon City

Still no sign of Barry Burton, sadly

PS3

We've been a bit down on *Operation Raccoon City* in recent months, decrying it for being a game with the *Resident Evil* tag hastily slapped on it and offering little beyond any other basic, boring third-person shooter. Which is why we're so pleased to say... no, actually we were

pretty much bang-on. The ability to sit down with the game for a bit longer has yielded yet more proof positive that *Resident Evil: Operation Raccoon City* isn't a very good game – at least not when you play it alone.

For more details on the game check out [www.residentevil.com/reorc/index.php](http://www.residentevil.com/reorc/index.php)



3

## HUMAN REVOLUTION

It's not all zombies you face off against in *Resident Evil: Operation Raccoon City*, with enemies of the less-dead variety ('humans') turning up to irritate by having the ability to both shoot back and hide in cover. Things did pick up a little when facing off against the less-mindless hordes, and using the troops to your benefit by wounding them, causing a bleedout and zombies to rush the poor bastard, is something we can see being quite the go-to technique. It's still pretty early days, but the human enemies we faced on *Resident Evil: Operation Raccoon City* weren't what would be called 'intelligent', failing as they did to use cover very effectively. At the same time, they did manage to put up quite a challenge.





It's slightly littered with Space Harrier-style shooter sections.

RELEASE DATE: FEBRUARY

# Asura's Wrath

aka International Finger Puncher 2012

PS3

*Asura's Wrath* is the kind of game where you, playing as the titular demigod, fight your traitorous fellow gods – one of whom is quite literally bigger than the world. We know this because we played it ourselves, and we were able to kill said 'heftier than a planetary body (yo mamma so fat)' by punching him on the end of his finger. And no, that is absolutely not a bad thing.

CyberConnect2, developer of *Asura's Wrath*, is probably best known outside of the .hack series for its work on the games based on the *Naruto* anime – as in, the good games based on *Naruto*. This shows itself through what we've played so far of the game, with a flair for flamboyant, over-the-top combat sequences and a selection of quick-time events that slot in fittingly to the action, rather than feeling like hasty, me-too additions.

Our time with the game did show a lot of the ol' 'press X to not die' stuff, but there were a few breaks from these themes with hints of scrolling shooter and classic beat-'em-up action thrown in for good measure.

But there's something beyond all of that, and it's called *insanity*. We go on about it quite a bit, but it really does make a difference – play a QTE, it could be good, it's usually boring. Play a QTE that results in you being stabbed through a planet, you're probably going to be laughing yourself blind.

While our time with the game didn't take in the standard, between-bosses action, we have been assured it will be interesting. Taking on a more normal structure with less of the QTE-based *fury* seen in the boss battles we took on, the typical sections of the game will be more straightforward run-about-and-twoock-baddies-in-the-face fare. Will it get boring? There's a chance. Will it matter if every boss battle is as utterly ridiculous and laughter-inducing as the ones we've played were? Not really, no. *Asura's Wrath* has gone from being one we were ready to let slip us by to one we really have to take a closer look at come next month when it's released.

*Asura's Wrath* is being developed by CyberConnect2. Check out [www.capcom-europe.com](http://www.capcom-europe.com) for more details.



What...What is this?

We don't know, Asura. We don't know.

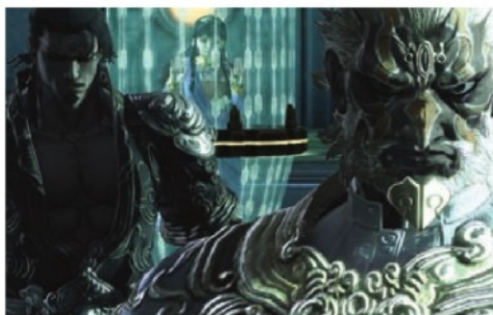


The Eight Guardian Generals  
Asura

## WRATHTACULAR

Doesn't seem that deadly a sin

**THE WRATH OF Asura** – encapsulated so wonderfully in the title of the game – isn't just something passingly referred to. As we battled bosses we noticed a meter filling up, as opposed to a decreasing energy bar. Once it hit the top a button prompt allowed us to 'go a bit mental' and punch people on the finger so hard *they died*. That's quite some wrath.



## WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- It's mental.
- You kill a god by punching the tip of his finger.
- No really – it's absolutely batshit crazy.
- Then get stabbed through a planet. THROUGH.

## READ ME

Never mind *Silent Bomber*, CyberConnect2 made that other PSone classic *Tail Concerto*. It's a classic because the player character is called Waffle Ryebread. Not a joke.



# PSV PREVIEWS

The games that will shape the future of PlayStation



RELEASE DATE: FEBRUARY

## WipEout 2048

A vital launch title?



Fun fact: in the United States the sequel to the first *WipEout* game – known as *WipEout 2097* on these shores – was called *WipEout XL*. Presumably this was because our chums over the pond at World Police HQ get confused by titles like that, invariably asking, ‘but what happened to the other 2,096?’

We’re not sure if they’ll change this title, *WipEout 2048*, yet (or what to: our money’s on ‘Whopper’ to continue the Burger King allusions) but everyone can rest assured they’ll be getting another highly polished, highly playable slice of anti-gravity racing.

What’s new? Well it’s on PSVita for a start, which should give all of the early adopters something to crow about that’s not yet another *Ridge Racer* game. Accordingly, it also aims to make use of Vita’s 4,000 (approx) input commands. There’s touch-screen controls for

using or absorbing weapons, and gyroscopic controls for steering your craft.

Surprisingly, the latter turns out to be Not Shit, unlike every game ever made that uses the PS3 equivalent. After only a short while **Play** was able to get a good grip on the nuances of the system, throwing our craft around corners and overtaking rivals. We wouldn’t want to play the game that way all the time, but for those that enjoy looking like a soccer mom who’s never played a game before then this is perfect.

More importantly, *WipEout 2048* enables players to go head-to-head with those that own *WipEout HD Fury* on the good old PlayStation 3. Sony’s big on its cross-platform play – first Steam, now this – and so we’re looking forward to seeing how the connectivity works out.

Because, make no mistake about it, multiplayer is a big deal

for Sony and developer Sony Liverpool, and the two are working hard to find a nice

balance between accessibility and fun. The answer they’ve come up with is not to simply drop players into a race and say ‘come first or face the ROFLs, cretin’. Instead the system is built around giving the multiplayer a more distinct structure in the form of individual objectives for each racer.

So, while a more experienced anti-grav pilot might actually be given the task of powering through the pack and finishing first, a newcomer might simply be told not to finish last, or to take out a certain amount of racers with weapons. As you progress through the ranks your missions will become more specialised, no doubt with the intent of easing you into the various game mechanics.

There's a much more industrial look to proceedings.



Which all sounds well and good, it must be said, but time will tell how this functionality will mesh together in the long run. What if you’re some sort of *WipEout* master already? What if you cream everyone in the field? Do you get more rewards? Skip levels like the clever kid in school?

Either way it sounds like a welcoming system to help all those newbies get on with the game, and that can never be a bad thing (unless it’s *Martyrdom* in *COD 4*).

As launch titles go *WipEout 2048* is already looking very accomplished, even if it doesn’t run at 60fps like its bigger brother. Between this, *Everybody’s Golf* and *Uncharted: Golden Abyss* it looks like those who decide to pick up a Vita on release will have plenty to cheer about. If not then they’re just miserable and shouldn’t be playing games in the first place.

**WipEout 2048** is being developed by Sony Liverpool. Visit <http://uk.playstation.com/wipeout2048/> for details.

### WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?



It’s *WipEout*, people.



And it’s got cross-platform play.



And it’s on Vita.



And it’s not 60fps. Oh.

### READ ME

The *WipEout* series has been a PlayStation institution since the early days of the brand, way back in 1995, before the internet and even oxygen existed. Fact.





● Anyone else getting a serious pod-racing vibe here?



● Events take place in modified, real-world environments.

## BACK IN TIME

What's different in this prequel?

AS **WIPEOUT 2048** is set in the early days of the anti-grav league's formation there are a bunch of changes that are immediately obvious. The first is that the races themselves don't take place on actual, specialised tracks. Instead you'll throw your craft around co-opted civilian roads, which surely means that the London track is going to be a nightmare. Ho ho.

Another change is that the tracks are apparently wider than before. Which is nice, and should make for some more aggressive overtaking and combat manoeuvres, although we still better be able to ram people into walls of death.







**IN-DEPTH**



RELEASE DATE: TBC 2012

✖ Remember fighting this blob? Eh? No. Us neither. We only remember eating the controller in rage.

- ✖ Running away, the wisest tactic used by only the smartest of ninjas.

Hayabusa's bow by tilting the Vita itself. "New controls for violent ninja action!" shouts Tecmo. "Controls we'll forget about when we're desperately mashing @ trying to survive!" we shout back. No-one listens. No-one ever listens.

Other newness comes in the form of *The Way Of The Ninja*, which offers new challenges such as one that forces you to use only projectiles. Worryingly, they're described as 'Extreme,' as if *Ninja Gaiden* wasn't hard enough. The difficulty will be balanced by 'hero mode' where Hayabusa automatically guards attacks – the series has come a long way since the departed Itagaki called the easier difficulty 'Ninja Dog.'

Otherwise, it's *Ninja Gaiden Sigma*, now on PlayStation Vita. We gave it 88% after we stopped weeping tears of blood and there's no reason to doubt the quality level will dip on PSVita. The only question is how well the extras will work and if it still feels lemon fresh. We'll see next month.

The Hardest Game Ever Made In The World Ever will be shrunk down by Tecmo for PlayStation Vita, providing the first stress test for Sony's portable when frustrated players try to snap it in two. For those who haven't experienced *Ninja Gaiden Sigma*, you play as Ryu Hayabusa, a ninja trying to survive absolutely every demonic creation ever farted from the arse of Satan. *Ninja Gaiden* is a series that has always traded on its hardcore difficulty and *Sigma* is no different.

This being a PlayStation Vita title, there are touch-screen controls thrown into the mix, too. You can now charge Ninpo spells with the rear touch screen and aim

The aptly named Team Ninja is cooking up Hayabusa's Vita bow and you can keep up to date with their progress at [teamninja-studio.com](http://teamninja-studio.com)

● Running away, the wisest tactic used by only the smartest of ninjas.



- As with *Sigma*, Rachel returns as a playable character.

&amp;@%\$£!

## Is Ninja Gaiden PS3's hardest game?

**NINJA GAIDEN SIGMA** was easily one of the hardest games ever released on PS3. Does its reputation hold up today? Not quite, simply because harder games have been released since then. *Mega Man 9* and *Mega Man 10* are the toughest kids on the PSN block but even they tremble in fear at the mere mention of *Dark Souls*.

● As with *Sigma*, *Rachel* returns as a playable character.

*Sigma* hits Vita with new controls, new challenges and new difficulty mode. Most of all, it'll hold the crown of being Vita's hardest game for a long, long while.

- Based on Director's Cut of *Sigma*.
- New challenges and easier difficulty available.
- Touch screen and tilt controls thrown in.
- It's *Ninja bloody Gaiden*. What more to say?



Gravity: make it your TOOL OF DESTRUCTION.

It's a looker.

UPDATE

RELEASE DATE: FEBRUARY

# Gravity Rush

Rushing in to leave us in a Daze

**PSV** One real negative of new gaming tech is that sometimes we get a bit confused as to what we're supposed to be doing. Enter *Gravity Rush*, with its intentions firmly placed in the 'let's make **Play** look like numpties' camp. But once you're used to the notion of playing with gravity, using the gyroscopic motion controls to manipulate your movement through the environment,

the embarrassment fades and you're left looking at a standout title for Vita's launch. The basic idea behind *Gravity Rush* (*Gravity Daze* in Japan) is that you're running about, beating stuff up, navigating what we've been told will be a sort of open-world floating island setting. The hook comes with that initially confusing harpy of a feature: gravity. Pressing a button makes the player 'take off' and begin doing

what we all wish we could – ignore gravity. Using Vita's gyroscopes to manipulate and move the world allows you to use any surface as you would the ground, opening up the world further for both exploration and combat strategy.

The most instantly noticeable factor about *Gravity Rush* – at least for you folks looking at these here pages – is how pretty it is. Easily one of the best-looking games we've seen for Vita so far, it's a stylish and rather beautiful game to add to the pile along with the likes of *Escape Plan*.

**Gravity Rush** is being developed by SCE Japan Studio. Check out <http://bit.ly/IP6Sp5> for more details.

## WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- A unique take on the third-person action genre.
- Clever use of Vita's control schemes.
- Why yes, it is quite a pretty one.
- It made us look like idiots for a bit... oh wait.

RELEASE DATE: FEBRUARY

# Army Corps Of Hell

Pikmin: HELL EDITION

**PSV** It would seem the King Of Hell suffered a bit of a *Skyrim* patch situation, what with his whole 'resistance to fire' thing being negated, his powers stripped and his body rather badly burned. What would you do in that situation: defeated in battle and kicked from your hellish throne? If you said 'amass an army of goblin followers using the last of my remaining powers and use them to fight all the way back to the throne I was ousted from' then *Army Corps Of Hell* might well have been stealing your ideas.

If you've ever played *Pikmin* – a great game on GameCube, much as it *sickens* us to admit – you'll sort of know what to expect here, just with heavy metal and more violence. If you

haven't played it: you control up to 100 goblins, commanding units of varying skills and abilities, one stick controls the player character and the other issues commands to the army. Think sort of like an RTS, or the minion-controlling system in *Overlord* (though on a grander scale).

Upgradeable units, some touch-screen integration for playing instruments and using power-ups and four-player multiplayer look like things that will keep our interest beyond the over-the-top nature already does. And even failing all of that, the mere fact people are comparing it to *Pikmin* has us interested, as it should you.

**Army Corps Of Hell** is being developed by Entersphere. Check out [www.armycorpsofhellgame.com](http://www.armycorpsofhellgame.com) for more details.

## WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- It's like *Pikmin*: FROM HELL.
- Hundreds of goblins on such a tiny screen. HUNDREDS.
- Four-player multiplayer could give it an unexpected edge.
- You don't have to listen to Japanese heavy metal while playing.



It could fill a *Patapon*/*Pikmin*-shaped hole in our lives.



## WHAT IS IT?

Those unfamiliar with *Ridge Racer*... are there any of you out there? It's a near-20-year-old series of racing games that seems to launch with every Sony-branded console and handheld. Taking place in (fictional) locales around a bright and breezy (fictional) world, players slalom and powerslide their way around tracks in Namco-themed cars (*Pac-Man*, *Galaga*, miscellaneous) and chain together boosts in what is, frankly, a series that hasn't ever been anything other than fun. Apart from on Nintendo handhelds, but we ignore those versions. Put in the simplest of terms: it just wouldn't be a PlayStation launch without a *Ridge Racer* game to go along with it.

RELEASE DATE: FEBRUARY

# Ridge Racer

RIIIIIIIIIIDGE  
RACEEEEERRRRRRRRR, etc



It's a legend of the gaming world – but more than that it's a meme. It would be a very sad world without a new entry to the series that gave us Sony bigwig Kaz Hirai embarrassing himself back at E3 2006. Search your favourite video-based website if you haven't seen it before – it's worth it.

Anyway, to business: one of the many launch titles making its way to Vita, *Ridge Racer* brings much of the classic, old, to-be-expected elements of the long-running drive-'em-up alongside some new touches. And to be honest, not all of the new touches are things we would happily refer to as 'good'. In fact, one major element in particular has our worry glands working overdrive. But hey, it could all turn out *fine*.



## WORLDWIDE RIDGEING

Planetary League will be the main focus of *Ridge Racer*'s online functionality, with the excellently named mode putting players into one of four teams (based on the PlayStation face buttons) and taking part in missions to improve their team's standing on a global scale. Said missions will be released on a daily basis by Namco to

keep things fresh – it's definitely an interesting idea, of that there's little doubt. 3G functionality isn't forgotten either, and World Race mode will allow players to upload and download ghost data to race against the best times in the world. Then, of course, there's standard multiplayer via Wi-Fi, with up to eight players competing.

## WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- ❑ Where would we be without *Ridge Racer* at launch? NOWHERE.
- ❑ Smooth and purdy, just as any RR title should be.
- ❑ An interesting delivery method, though it may well fail.
- ❑ It reminds us of Kaz, it brings back Ken.

## READ ME

*Ridge Racer* on Vita, being developed by Cellius, means one thing: the return of Ken Kutaragi. He's one of the best people around – good to have you back, Kenny.

## CHECK YOUR FACTS

Clearing up some misconceptions about Vita's first *Ridge Racer*...



❑ You are not actually a part of the United Galaxy Space Force.



❑ This track will not demand you fork out extra pound/euro/dollarge.



3

## BITE-SIZED

There's been some consternation about *Ridge Racer*'s release plans on Vita – namely the fact that the game you buy from the shops/PSN won't be the full thing. Instead it comes with just three tracks and five cars, though at a reduced price (roughly £20-£30). Content will be topped up by a series of DLC releases – tracks, cars and music packs – for a range of prices. It's the sort of approach we want to get behind, but it's also the sort of approach that doesn't fill our hearts with glee when the entry point isn't *that* cheap. It's a confused take on the whole freemium thing, and look how far that got *MX Vs ATV: Alive* (clue: the series is dead).



## 4 LOOKS DON'T MATTER

It comes as little surprise that *Ridge Racer* is a nice-looking piece of Vita-shaped kit – it's often one of the launch titles that makes us sit up and take notice with its spangly joy. What is surprising, though, among all of this smooth running and glitzy backgrounds is the fact the game runs at 30 frames per second. Now that's not a deal breaker – there's certain to be some whining about it, but it doesn't destroy the entire game. We're just surprised that on a new, powerful handheld Namco isn't going out of its way to dazzle us all with a 60fps tour de force. Ah well, we can still dream.



## 5 ISSUES OF CONTROL

Never fear: this is the *Ridge Racer* we know and slide about with. It's not the finest example of a game to demonstrate our newfound love of all things twin-stick (NB love not actually 'newfound'). Responsive and as veterans of the series would expect, the game handles with no real issues – at least as far as we could see. From our time with the game it doesn't look like Cellius is crowbarring in any touch screen or touchpad controls. And judging by how poorly they worked on the DS and 3DS versions of the game, it's quite clearly for the better that we stay with stick controls. There's no harm in throwing in touch functionality, though, obviously.



● The palm trees are not specifically referred to as such, but we think of them as freebies.



● It won't work on a 'pay-per-play' system when competing online, at least.



● You're unlikely to be charged £3 per boost bar, which is nice.



# PREVIEW

## ZEN'D OUT

Unsurprisingly you play as a ninja... and that ninja's name is Zen. After being betrayed by his fellow clansmen and left with nothing of his old life, he's consumed by the need for revenge on those that have wronged him. Whereas most people would simply carry on this grudge for years, sometimes posting snarky statuses and comments on his former friends' Facebook walls or blurting it out when crying drunk, this was the *past*. Things were different back then, and soon Zen is picked up by the Asuka Ninja clan, who teach him their ways, hopefully via an Eighties-style montage. From there it's up to Zen and the player to teach these fools a lesson the only way he knows how: ninja style.



## KICK, TOUCH, IT'S ALL IN THE MIND

Being set in feudal Japan, *Shinobido* is going to be rocking the very oldest in ninja tech as one of its key offensive options: the throwing star. Obviously keen to get the Vita's alternate input devices in there, *anywhere*, developer Acquire has made it so you can use the touch screen to throw them. Which we're not going to argue with, but other promised touch screen controls don't seem quite as intuitive: everything from switching to a first-person viewpoint to seeing enemies' alert phases is present, but couldn't we just press a button for that? It does make us wonder what other uses await us, however: will there be a motion control for swordplay? There better be, Acquire. There better be.

1



RELEASE DATE: FEBRUARY

# Shinobido 2: Revenge Of Zen

Taking a trip to feudal Japan? Make sure to pack your throwing stars



If the name *Shinobido* rings a few bells but you just can't place it, then first ask yourself this question: are you thinking of *Shinobi*, Sega's decades-old side-scroller? Yes? Thought so.

For the 0.1 per cent that weren't and can actually recall the original *Shinobido*

game for the PS2, then you're probably going to be quite pleased that the sequel is coming out, and slightly less pleased that you'll have to buy a Vita to play it. Swings and roundabouts, eh?

**Shinobido 2** is being published by Namco Bandai. Pop over to [www.namcobandaigames.com](http://www.namcobandaigames.com) for more details.

3

## MEN'S STEALTH

As a ninja Zen isn't going to be attacking most enemies from the front, preferring to strike silently. You'll be able to go toe-to-toe with your enemies but it's not advisable. Instead you'll be able to use all manner of ninja-gear to get the job done. We've mentioned the ubiquitous sword and throwing stars, but what about the Uzumibi, a sort-of landmine that will incapacitate foes? Given that this is an Acquire game – it is responsible for the similarly ninja-themed *Tenchu* games – also expect the use of hiding in the shadows and grappling onto buildings to jump down and perform the perfect kill. We're expecting good things from this.







RELEASE DATE: TBC 2012

## F1 2011

It's got a great personality

**PSV** One of PS Vita's main selling points is that it can apparently offer near-parity with the PS3 on the graphics front. Whether this is all lame marketing swill will be decided in time, but right now you've got to hand it to Codies (and Sumo Digital) for making sure that the Vita version of its popular F1 series is just as graphically abhorrent as its PS3 brother. Just *look*



at it. Are those *hands*, or has Formula 1 technology finally reached the endgame and replaced drivers' fingers with spade-like interface devices? We wager not, as it hasn't apparently mastered the wheel. We've seen clown cars with more convincing curves.

But let's forget that this looks like something out of a videogame tester's worst fever dreams and get down to the content of the game, which is, it must be said quite extensive. There's a Grand Prix mode as you'd expect, as well as time trials to negotiate. Bolstering the single-player package is a challenge mode, which, as you've probably guessed, consists of mini-goals for the player to achieve, such as overtaking cars and so on. All very standard, but we're glad it's there.

Far more intriguing is the suite of online modes, some of which are very interesting indeed. Four-player GP? Two-on-two co-op career mode? Sounds good to us, even if it looks terrible.

**F1 2011** is being developed by Codemasters. Check out [www.formula1-game.com/uk/](http://www.formula1-game.com/uk/) for more details on the game.

### WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- ☐ Not the graphics, that's for sure.
- ☐ But the gametypes on offer seem solid.
- ☐ Come on, look at them.
- ☐ With a very cool sounding online suite.



RELEASE DATE: TBC 2012

We see this on every shot we take.

## New Little King's Story

I just can't wait to be king

**PSV** Originally released in 2009 on Nintendo's Wii to good reviews, Konami has decided to broaden the cutesy, perfect-for-the-Wii blue-sky-a-thon's reach and release *Little King's Story* on Vita, substituting waggle controls for touch-screen input in the process.

But what *is* *New Little King's Story*? Good question: no one actually plays the Wii so we wouldn't expect you to know what the score is. A Japanese role-playing game with *Peace Walker*-style army recruitment, it casts you as the 14-year-old King Corobo, who has to reclaim the kingdom from a dark force known as 'The Nightmare'. You'll do this by rounding up your loyal subjects and training them up in their differing abilities. Striking the right balance of proles for the mission at hand is one of the core elements of the game, and is central to your success. Once you've got the team together you can then marshal them using the aforementioned touch-



screen controls, enabling you to group units with a touch and swipe the screen to move them.

Which sounds nice, but what about the actual game underneath all of this groping and touching? Well, there's been no word on substantial changes, but we're hoping that Konami has listened to the feedback it received over the course of the two years since the original game hit the shelves. If the few kinks can be ironed out then this could be a very successful launch title for Sony's new baby.

**New Little King's Story** is being developed by Konami Japan. Check <http://uk.games.konami-europe.com/games.do> for updates.

### WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- ☐ It's a good game.
- ☐ And thanks to the Vita.
- ☐ That could be better.
- ☐ Probably will be.





# PREVIEW



## MAX PAYNE 3



**PUBLISHER:** Rockstar Games **DEVELOPER:** Rockstar Vancouver  
**ETA:** March

Don't take this the wrong way, Rockstar, but the recent video released talking up the features on *Max Payne 3* did make our collective eyebrow raise. The claims that an over-the-shoulder aiming system was in any way new or revolutionary, which seemed to be the case, made us laugh derisively. And that's not what we want to do with *Max Payne 3*, because we're looking forward to playing as a fat, bald, bearded bloke as he slides around on his belly in slow motion shooting a host of bad guys. To the point where we might even be tempted to pick up the collector's edition of the game, though the ten-inch figure it comes with isn't of our new favourite incarnation of Max, instead being of the younger, slimmer, un-bald version. Sigh.



## JOURNEY



**PUBLISHER:** Sony Computer Entertainment **DEVELOPER:** thatgamecompany **ETA:** Spring

*Journey* is looking like being an emotional and evocative experience, the likes of which there is no compare – at least not in the history of Sony's PlayStation 3 or the future (that we know about). An incredibly simple premise – you're making your way across a vast desert to a mountain – is framed in such a way that it's difficult not to be intrigued, and developer thatgamecompany's design ethos is testament to this fact. As the company has pointed out recently, it works by trying to make a connection with the player above all else. In the case of *Journey* this is through the desert environment: overwhelming to the point it makes the player feel almost powerless – the exact opposite of how they feel in so many other games.

# THE BEST OF THE REST...



## CATHERINE



**PUBLISHER:** Deep Silver **DEVELOPER:** Atlus Persona Team **ETA:** February

We reviewed *Catherine* on its Japanese release in *Play* 204, awarding it 48%. For those who don't remember, it's a game about Vincent, who has been haunted by nightmares since cheating on his girlfriend Katherine with a girl called Catherine, while at the same time young men have been dying mysteriously in their sleep. So yes, it might not be the sort of game to get really excited about it turning up on European shores, but we're behind it getting a release 100 per cent. And who knows – maybe a translation and the benefit of it being removed from the hype behind its release might warm our reception to the EU version. That's quite unlikely, though.



## AWESOMENAUTS



**PUBLISHER:** dtp entertainment AG **DEVELOPER:** Ronimo Games **ETA:** February

*Awesomenauts* has a character in it that is a 'mad scientist monkey' – this alone would be enough to convince us normally that we want to play the game. But Ronimo developed the brilliant *Swords And Soldiers*, which we awarded 88% in *Play* 199, meaning our interest levels are much higher than they'd be through sheer mad scientist monkey-influence alone. A side-scrolling arena-based multiplayer title, *Awesomenauts* sees two teams of three trying to complete objectives and eff each other up. 'Advanced' drop-in, drop-out systems should ensure that as soon as you want to play you can – no waiting about – and generally speaking it's looking to be a bit of a hoot.



## SOUTH PARK



**PUBLISHER:** THQ **DEVELOPER:** Obsidian Entertainment **ETA:** TBC 2012

On the grand scale of 'things that were unexpected', this ranks quite highly: Obsidian, creator of *Fallout: New Vegas* and *Dungeon Siege III* (among many others) were approached by South Park Studios, creator of... umm... *South Park*, to make a PS3 RPG based on the fantastic TV show. Playing as a silent protagonist, players are to make friends with the other kids and go on adventures in the usual ridiculous *South Park* fashion. So far it's sounding truly intriguing, with examples of Matt Stone and Trey Parker overruling Obsidian's design choices already popping up – it doesn't seem like this will be the usual *South Park* crap we're used to in gaming. At least not on the surface.





## SYNDICATE

PS3

**PUBLISHER:** EA **DEVELOPER:** Starbreeze

**ETA:** February

More details have emerged of *Syndicate*'s co-operative multiplayer, and time with the game has shown that this isn't merely a bolted-on addition to the experience. No, to succeed you're going to have to actually work together to accomplish your corporate espionage, your forced suicides and your general ultraviolence. Feedback to the single-player has been mixed, and feedback to the multiplayer has been even more mixed, if that's possible. Basically, this could go either way – and we hope beyond hope that it goes the right way as this is a game we desperately want to be awesome. We've got good memories of the *Syndicate* series, you see, and we don't want Starbreeze to make us any more bitter and twisted than we already are with a disappointing next-gen version.



## BLAZBLUE: CONTINUUM SHIFT EXTEND

PS3

**PUBLISHER:** Arc System Works Europe/PQube **DEVELOPER:** Arc System Works **ETA:** March

This update to *BlazBlue* is coming to PS3 with things like previous DLC-only characters included on the disc, but that's not the interesting part – no, that comes with being shown the PSVita version. Look how pretty it is. Alright, so that's not the only reason to care, but it is a looker for a handheld game. Other additions come in the form of team battles – 2v2, 3v3 and handicap options are available (2v3, for example) – and something called Unlimited Mars mode, which offers the challenge of 'the toughest opposition you've ever faced' (their words, not ours). If it's priced right we could see this tempting us back to this very good fighting game.

Join us as we serve up a smorgasbord of the titles we simply didn't have space for this month due to the feast of tasty PSVita previews



## FINAL FANTASY XIV

PS3

**PUBLISHER:** Square Enix **DEVELOPER:** Square Enix Product Development Division 3

**ETA:** 2013

This beleaguered MMO has been out for about a year now on PC and is making slow, baby steps towards being something actually worth playing. The subscription-free period has now come to an end, with Square Enix beginning to do what it intended to do from the start – charge players to play – but there's still a discount on the charge until version 2.0 is released later this year. Why does this matter to you? Well, all of the changes and updates will be applied to the PlayStation 3 version of *Final Fantasy*, so when we do eventually get it, it should be a version actually worth playing.



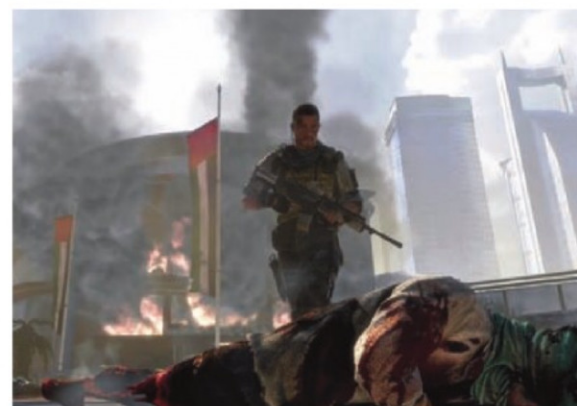
## NEXUIZ

PS3

**PUBLISHER:** TBC **DEVELOPER:** Illfonic

**ETA:** Summer

Originally starting out as a free, open-source first-person shooter based on the Quake engine for various home computer operating systems, *Nexuiz* has been reformed, redeveloped and changed into something coming to worthwhile platforms ('PlayStation 3'). The changes range from the engine, which has moved to being based on CryEngine 3, to the setting, which adopts a mix of futuristic and pseudo-Victorian styles. As for the game? It's being positioned as an arena-based online shooter; hyper-competitive and the sort of thing that entire leagues and dedicated clans are set up for. A bit deeper than *Call Of Duty*, then? Maybe.



## SPEC OPS: THE LINE

**PUBLISHER:** 2K Games **DEVELOPER:** Yager

Development **ETA:** TBC 2012

PS3

It's been in hiding for quite a while now – so long in fact that we'd almost forgotten about it – but *Spec Ops: The Line* from 2K Games has popped back up out of cover to give us a fresh look at the sandy manshooter. It turns out the development team at Yager Development is pushing for a darker, grittier way of showing us the Dubai-based conflict. We've heard that a thousand times before, but the point where you are forced to execute a civilian for stealing or a soldier for killing said thief's family while hunting the man down is... interesting. Things like this make us think *Spec Ops: The Line* might actually be worth paying attention to.



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86 SoulCalibur V PS3  
The best of times, the worst of times



88 Metal Gear Solid: HD PS3  
Snake? Snake?! SNAAAAAAAKE



90 Persona 2 PSP  
PSP isn't dead just yet...

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RELEASE DATE: 3 FEBRUARY

# Final Fantasy XIII-2

Changes abound, but still well within its comfort zone



## DETAILS

**Publisher**  
Square Enix  
**Developer**  
Division 1  
**Price**  
£49.99  
**Players**  
1  
**Genre**  
Role-playing game  
**Age Rating**  
16  
**Website**  
www.finalfantasy13-  
2game.com  
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facebook.com/  
FinalFantasy13Game

PS3

The sort of sweeping changes seen in *Final Fantasy XIII-2* aren't the kind that will drag you in, blind and gleeful, regardless of your long-standing genre allegiances. That's because the sweeping changes seen in *Final Fantasy XIII-2*, while pushing the game away from the path taken by *Final Fantasy XIII*, do take this second direct sequel of the franchise into what is still well-worn territory. You'll either see it as a good thing or a bad thing, but the

Trying to open all of the time gates in each time zone can become quite an addictive endeavour

fact remains: *FFXIII-2* is still very much a JRPG; it's still the sort of thing that will appeal to fans of the genre and series; it's still not going to convince those with no standing interest in the genre. But then, it was never made for the latter group anyway – this is absolutely fan service done Squenix style.

We pick up the story three years after *Final Fantasy XIII* left off (SPOILERS): Orphan has been destroyed; the people are no longer

under the control of the godlike fal'Cie; Cocoon has been devastated but still stands, supported by the pillar of crystal made of, by and from Fang and Vanille; life is beginning again (SPOILERS END).

But there are differences – Serah, back from her bout as a lump of crystal in the last game and now the lead character, is confused: Lightning was there to greet her when the gang came around from its crystalline slumber on Gran Pulse, but

nobody else remembers this – they all think she formed the crystal pillar along with Fang and Vanille. Soon enough, a young chap called Noel

Kriess turns up (by way of *Kingdom Hearts*, at least by the look of him) with news that Lightning *isn't* now made of crystal and is in fact in a place called Valhalla, naturally. Still with us? This leads to Serah and Noel travelling through time, changing the future, altering the past and generally dealing with all the fun, contradictions and paradoxes that sort of behaviour comes with. It starts out confusing, it gets a bit more confusing and

• Mog is one part great fan service, one part massive irritant who should SHUT UP.



it takes a while to get your head around the whole thing.

But, while we'd never go so far as to claim it a Huge Success in storytelling, there is intrigue and interest conjured up by *FFXIII-2*'s tale. Beginning as it does: partway through an ongoing situation, filling in the gaps as you progress, showing you false futures and histories you go on to change – it's clumsy at times, convoluted at others, but it *keeps you interested*. Just as *FFXIII*'s story wasn't anything to write home about, yet it kept you playing with its relentless pace and drove you forward (usually down corridors), *FFXIII-2* succeeds somewhat in spite of itself. You're not getting *Uncharted 3* levels of cut-scene glory, you *will* be sectioned if you claim much of the voice acting is anything other than 'not terrible at best' and there's enough melodrama to fit an entire generation's worth



## THE MORE THINGS CHANGE...

...The more they reintroduce old elements to keep you happy

**IN WHAT IS** rather overt, though not unwelcome, fan service, *FFXIII-2* sees moogles, chocobos and shops returning – all absent from the last game. Mog the moogles is useful for finding treasure and hidden bits and bobs, chocobos are great for getting around the map without being attacked (as well as racing at the casino) and the shops... well, the shops are a letdown. We were under the impression *FFXIII-2* would see the return of proper shops in towns, but it instead just sees the one-time-travelling character Chocolina taking on the role of shopkeeper everywhere in the game. Ah well.

In this series



**Final Fantasy XIII** Issue 190  
Beautiful, epic and we liked it, but as divisive a *Final Fantasy* game as there's been. **85%**





of teenage diaries. But somehow, some way it doesn't outstay its welcome; it doesn't make you not want to carry on playing.

Of course, this is in large part due to the actual *game* bit. As much as you will be sat for 15-minute spells half-watching the story unfold, there's the meat of the matter. *FFXIII-2* is a more open game than its ancestor – it's still decidedly linear, but there's more freedom to take your time, to double back on yourself and to re-explore previously seen areas than there was last time around. The time-travel system plays up to this, with the Historia Crux (think: level select menu) offering the chance to choose the order in which players approach the game, as well as 'reset' the timelines once completed to play through it again and try out different things. It doesn't change a huge amount depending on how you play it, so this

is more a novelty feature than anything, but it does add at least something to the longevity of the experience. Plus trying to open all of the time gates in each time zone can become quite an addictive endeavour.

This more open approach shouldn't fool you into thinking *FFXIII-2* is an open-world game – it's simply home to more explorable areas and less corridors for you to be funnelled through. In fact, from an in-game mechanics standpoint, it's very much a traditional JRPG – run around a safe town area, explore the dangerous wilderness or a dungeon, solve a few puzzles (mostly on the easier side of things), grind a little bit, beat the boss, move on. That's all there, and anybody worried *FFXIII-2* would take things too far from the *Final Fantasy* formula should be relieved to know it's traditional fare, just blended up with a few other factors from *FF* games and the >



Or you could try



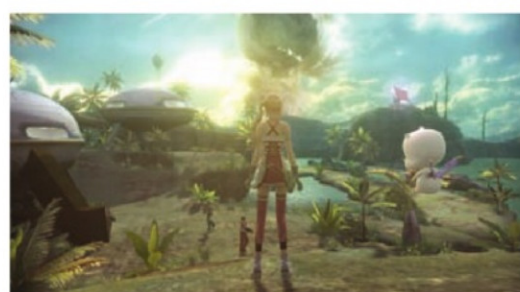
**The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim** Issue 212  
The pinnacle of Western RPGs and almost the polar opposite to *FFXIII-2* 93%



> genre as a whole. Those on the other side, though, hoping for a progressive take on the franchise and one that truly offers something new... well, they're not really catered for. But is it a criticism to say something not made for people of a particular taste isn't made for people of a particular taste? Probably not.

The battle system is one of the biggest features to remain largely unchanged, and the paradigm system from *FFXIII* fortunately makes a comeback. It's a deceptively simple system, offering flowing, smooth tactical choice during every fight – it isn't always necessary to win, but when it is you realise just how solid a battle system it really is. One main change is the addition of the ability to capture monsters and have them fight on your side as a third-party member. These wee beasties can be upgraded and levelled up, learning new skills as they progress, they can be customised to some extent and combined with other creatures to create a superior version of the original. It's a decent extra feature, allowing for a bit more tactical planning in battles – will you bring a battering ram-like chocobo into the fight with you, or stick with the healing techniques of a Cait Sith (not the one from *FFVII*)? Once again, it's deceptively simple – it doesn't get in the way or demand undue attention, and having a constantly interchangeable third member of your party brings with it a great deal more tactical nuance than with pre-prescribed characters.

Another major change is something that we were surprised to find works quite well – Cinematic Action sections (quick-time events) pop up during boss battles and offer a chance to do a bit more damage, finish off a fight in style and pick up a bonus item or two if you're good enough. They're not



invasive and they're not overused – it's still an odd choice to include them, but they're not entirely unwelcome either.

It's not all smooth sailing, as you may have gathered. For every change that benefits, or

## There's no doubt in our minds that Final Fantasy XIII-2 is a welcome addition to the series

brings something new or interesting to the game, there's sometimes another element that diminishes or drags things down to a very staid level. The Mog Clock, for example, manages to cover both bases – it's an interesting take on the random battle system, allowing for player skill and awareness to play a part in how they perform in their battles (or how they avoid them). On the other hand and at the basest level, it is simply a reintroduction

of random battles – an element we would be happy to see die a miserable death, and something that had disappeared from *FFXIII*.

In fact, *FFXIII-2* is full of these contradictions – and we don't just mean the things they keep on talking about in the storyline – like how bringing back the classic *Final Fantasy* character in Mog is both brilliant

(oh, how we missed him), and awful (oh, he is one of the most irritating characters known to humanity). Or like how seeing a concise resolution to the stories of *FFXIII*'s characters is more than welcome, what with the last game offering a fair few vagaries in its ending – but it does mean more genuinely, curl-up-embarrassed-while-you're-watching-them cut-scenes, with acting that would make Pauly Shore (Google him) wince. Does it ruin the game? No. Does it irritate and is it something we wish wasn't true of the experience? Yep.

Then there's Live Trigger, the dialogue choice system. It is, without a shadow of a doubt, one of the more pointless additions to *Final Fantasy XIII-2*. There is very little need for it to be here, and while it does offer the chance to hear a few nuggets of differing dialogue, it brings nothing of real note to the game and could very easily have been left out with the finished product feeling no ill effect whatsoever.

Even so, there's no doubt in our minds that *Final Fantasy XIII-2* is a welcome addition to the series. It's refreshing to see a Japanese developer of such heritage, of such tradition, take steps to rectify what were seen as missteps by the company's fan base. It doesn't set everything back perfectly on track, it doesn't do anything that will draw in anyone other than existing JRPG fans and it does make a fair few mistakes – but it's still







Gysahl Yes indeed, those 'giant yellow chickens' return, along with their theme tune.



## WORDS AND MEANINGS

Because natty titles don't always explain what things do



WHAT THEY SAY: 'Cinematic Action'  
WHAT THEY MEAN: 'QTEs'



WHAT THEY SAY: 'Temporal Rift'  
WHAT THEY MEAN: 'Simple puzzles'



WHAT THEY SAY: 'Live Trigger'  
WHAT THEY MEAN: 'Meaningless dialogue choices'



WHAT THEY SAY: 'Historia Crux'  
WHAT THEY MEAN: 'Level select menu'



Travelling through time means you get to see areas in many different stages of development.



fun, it's still good enough to keep you playing for the dozens of hours needed to see one of the multiple endings and it goes some way to making *Final Fantasy XIII* seem like less of a black sheep in the series' history. We do recommend *FFXIII-2*, but it's not a game that – even with changes across the board – really offers something *different* in the genre.

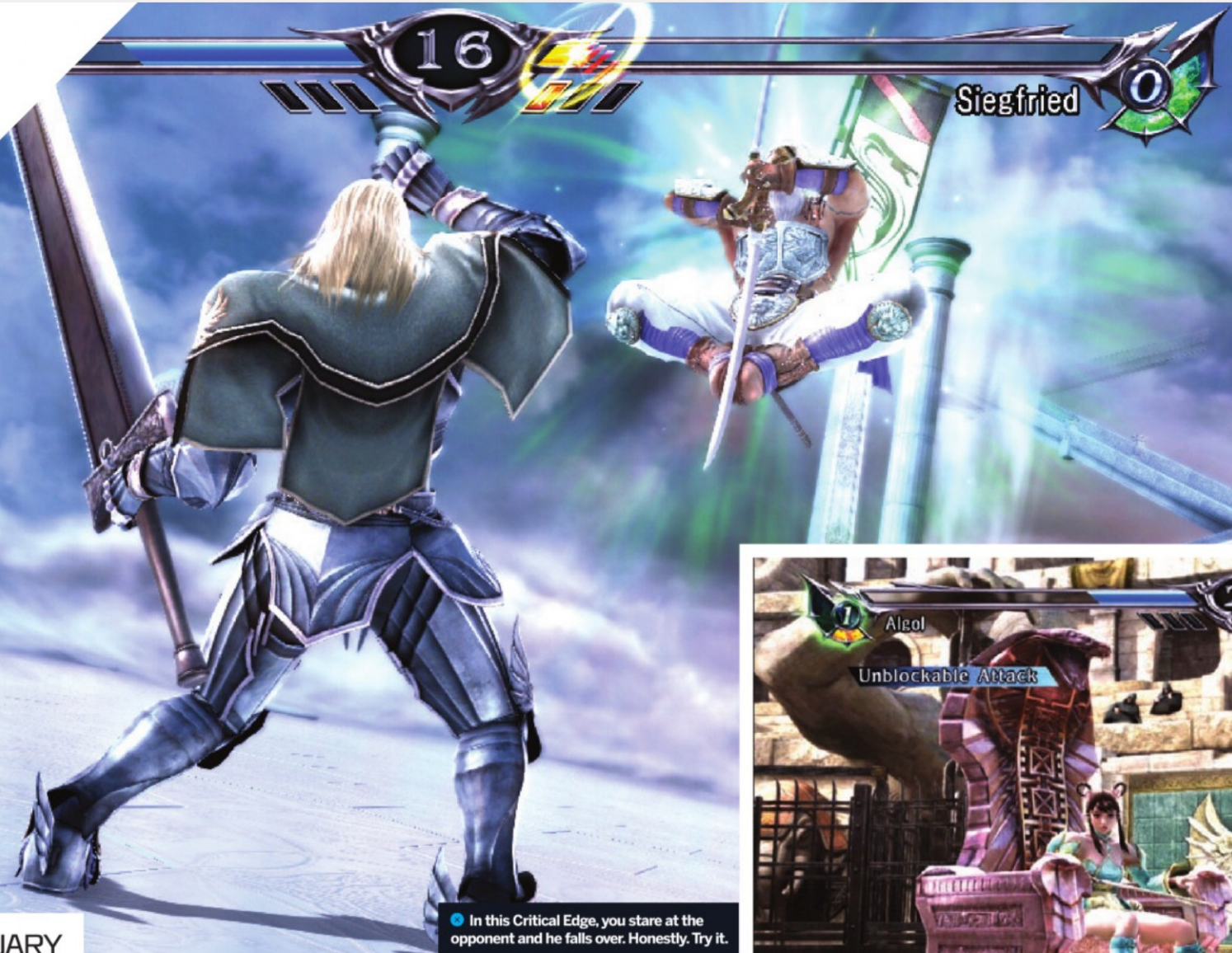
Ian Dransfield

## VERDICT

Not the vastly different experience we might have expected, but no less welcome as a result. *FFXIII-2* comes recommended for those who didn't get enough from the last game – however, those who were unconvinced are going to remain just that.

80%





RELEASE DATE: 3 FEBRUARY

In this Critical Edge, you stare at the opponent and he falls over. Honestly. Try it.

# SoulCalibur V

Cue predictable 'soul man' joke LOL

PS3

Do you have friends? No, not normal friends. We mean friends who like games and mashing buttons, watching magical things happen as fire lights up the screen and a samurai slashes away at a ninja. Or perhaps friends who know what *SoulCalibur* is, even if they can't pronounce Kilik and will never, ever learn any moves because they might as well be looking at Egyptian hieroglyphs for all the sense a moves list makes to them. Because if you're going to play this, you *need* those friends.

The fighting side of *SoulCalibur V* is brilliant and the best the series has ever been. It's unlikely to pass the eye-test and, in fairness to the arms-crossed cynic tapping his foot with doubt, there's nothing hugely different on the surface. It's still two people slapping each other with weapons until one of them falls over and can't get back up. It's still garnished with nuclear colours, and day-glo special effects. It's still a fantastical take on historic fighting with crumbling forts, giant rafts and caged arenas.

Until the day Namco Bandai loses the plot and includes fatalities or dragons who fire rockets out the yazoo, this is what *SoulCalibur* is and always will be. It has its own unique feel and a real sense of identity as the fighting game genre becomes ever more cluttered and eccentric.

Yet the real genius lies beyond the lazy eye-test. Underneath its garish exterior, a series of

tweaks, tucks and touches refine the experience to be as razor sharp as it's ever been. Without descending into technical moonspeak that only the hardest of hardcore fighting game players will understand, the biggest difference has been the addition of meter. As you fight, you're rewarded for successful hits and blocks with meter, which can then be spent on Critical Edges (supers), Brave Edges (enhanced normal moves) and Guard Impacts (parry attempts). If it sounds complicated, think of it this way – it's a system that mirrors what 2D fighting games have been doing for years and years and years.

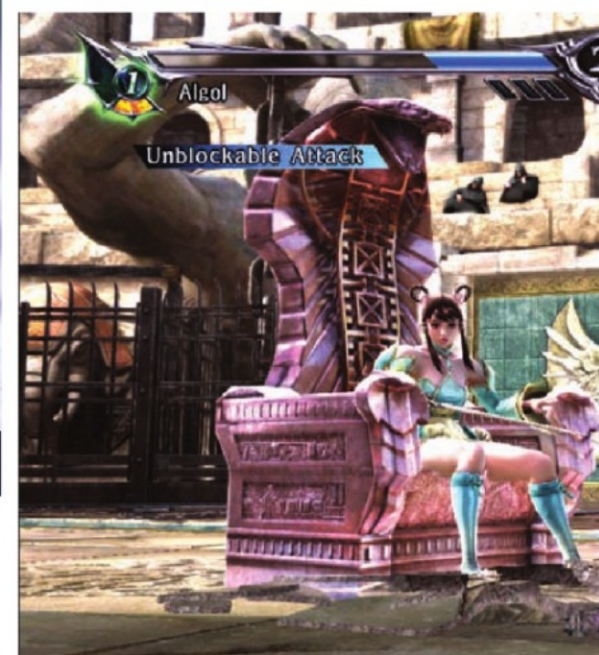
It works for the same reason it works in those 2D fighters – it adds an extra layer of strategy beyond waving your sword around like you're swiping at insects. Do you save your meter for a big comeback gamble or spend it on parries to apply pressure? If your opponent has half a bar, what new options does he have that you need to be aware of? It's a simple addition but brilliant in that it raises the amount of questions you and your opponent ask of each other during play and creates more combo and comeback possibilities. Add in some great new characters in Viola and Z.W.E.I. along



## DETAILS

**Publisher**  
Namco Bandai  
**Developer**  
Namco Bandai  
**Price**  
£51.05  
**Players**  
1-2  
**Genre**  
Beat-'em-up  
**Age Rating**  
16  
**Website**  
soulcalibur.com  
**Twitter**  
@Daishi\_CALIBUR  
**Facebook**  
facebook.com/  
SoulCalibur

One of the best fighting games we've played in years and one of the worst single-player modes



with fresh takes on old favourites such as Natsu and Leixia and it adds up to a brilliant game, built on solid fundamentals while feeling zesty fresh.

"But Play," you muse, stroking your chin. "What of this need for friends you spoke of in the opening paragraph?" Yes. That. We hate to break up the party, especially as Namco Bandai has just popped the corks on its champagne bottles, but it's not just a brilliant fighting game the studio has created. It has, unfortunately, also created one of the most anaemic single-player games we've seen this gen.

Single-player is split between Story, Quick Battle and Legend of Lost Souls. Story mode is another tale of the *SoulCalibur* sword and those affected by it. There are some surprising characters who show up (or character variations, to be as precise as possible without alerting the Spoiler Police) yet cameos and cut-scenes aside, it's over far too quickly. You can rattle through it in a few breezy hours and we literally mean rattle through it, as mashing

Or you could try



**Tekken 6** Issue 184  
Namco Bandai's other beat-'em-up is also a bit good. **94%**





## MEET MY FRANKENSTEIN

Character creation levels up

**YOU COULD PLAY** as Ivy, Voldo, Mitsurugi and the usual gang or you could go the more extravagant route and create your own character. Character shape, sex, build, height, clothes, weapons, pose, effects, everything can be tweaked and manipulated. *SoulCalibur IV* had a good system but *SoulCalibur V* has a great system – you can even put an apple on your created character's head. Not sure why you'd want to apart from, well, you can put a bloody apple on your created character's head. How good is that?



• This is how we deal with dissenters on Play.



• Captions help explain what's happening in the picture. But we, erm... no. It can't be done. Not here.



on the buttons with your sausage fingers is enough to steamroller through your opponents.

Quick Battle is better as it pits you against AI opponents with their own unique fighting styles and look, yet the AI is a poor substitute for human competition. Only the novelty of seeing funny costumes really sustains it, though, while *Legends of Lost Souls*, designed for the hardcore, will lock 99 per cent of players out with its bastard tough, ball-kicking difficulty. Single-player is something that no fighting game has done particularly well but that should be the excuse to break with tradition, not continue it. It's not even an excuse as valid as it once was since *Mortal Kombat*'s release, as its meaty story, wealth of challenges and Krypt unlockables show single-player should be more than an afterthought in fighting games. It's a lesson Namco Bandai hasn't paid attention to.

We've never seen a game that, in the space of just a few menu options, manages to be both So, So Right and So, So Wrong. The heart of

*SoulCalibur*, the fighting game at its core, shines in Versus mode and should the online side of that hold up, the unlockable titles, custom characters and general play will find the perfect platform there, too. It's just a shame that while *SoulCalibur V* is one of the best fighting games we've played in years, it's also welded to one of the worst single-player modes we've seen in years. Our score reflects that this is essential if you have friends you can play this with, otherwise think long and hard before diving in on your lonesome.

Ryan King

## VERDICT

**There's no faulting the fighting here – it's balanced, it's brutal, it's beautiful, it's brilliant. It's easily up there with the essential multiplayer titles on PS3. Yet the supporting single-player modes are so flimsy and weak, we have to deduct marks.**

**80%**

In this series



**SoulCalibur IV** Issue 196  
Yes, the score is slightly wrong. This game is much better. **94%**



• Astaroth is still a mean bastard if you're not used to fighting him.





RELEASE DATE: 3 FEBRUARY

# Metal Gear Solid HD Collection

Kept you waiting, huh?



## DETAILS

**Publisher**  
Konami

**Developer**  
Bluepoint Games

**Price**  
£39.99

**Players**  
1-4

**Genre**  
Stealth

**Age Rating**  
15

**Website**  
[www.konami.jp/](http://www.konami.jp/)  
[kojima\\_pro/](http://kojima_pro/)

**Twitter**  
@Konami

**Facebook**  
[facebook.com/konami](https://www.facebook.com/konami)



After suffering a needless delay in Europe thanks to the suits deciding the game should be held back for this year's 25th anniversary of the series, the *MGS HD Collection* is finally almost here. In terms of graphical grunt it's been more than worth the wait: Bluepoint Games has done a superb job and this is one of the most outstanding HD remasters available. Part of this is down to the original art assets being stunning, but make no mistake, fire up *MGS 3* and you could be playing an early-mid PS3 game. It's that good.

Which is great. The games now look like we remember them. But how do they play? Well... We'll start with the oldest game in the package, 2002's *MGS 2: Sons Of Liberty*. Arriving on the crest of one of videogaming's most outrageous waves of hype it was lauded by almost every mag under the sun for being a great game and quite possibly the secret to world peace.

The truth was that it was nowhere near as good as any of the other games in the series. Granted, the opening hour or so aboard the tanker is great: a beautiful-looking playground of interactivity filled with loving winks and nods to the first game. This section really showed how the new mechanics (first-person aiming for one) improved the core sneaking gameplay.

And then Raiden turns up and it all falls to pieces. Not necessarily because you're not



The third game is still superb. Just look at it.

playing as Snake, it's more to do with the fact that the Big Shell section is a maze of bland environments and pretentious plotting that makes precisely zero sense. All of the great gameplay mechanics are still there obviously, but they're constantly interrupted by some waffle you can't even pause. Time has not been kind to *MGS 2*: the overhead camera is restrictive and its control system is finger-breakingly bad.

*MGS 3: Snake Eater*, however, is sensational: the perfect embodiment of the series' mix of stealth gameplay and over-the-top storytelling. Set in the Sixties – players take up the role of Naked Snake, soon to be Big Boss and Snake's genetic father – with the Cold War as its backdrop it dials back the mental narrative shenanigans, moves out of the boxy industrial environments into the jungles of Russia, throws in close-quarters combat and adjusting your camo to avoid detection and is generally regarded as one of the best games of all time.

There seems to be a trend with *Metal Gear* games where Kojima follows up a masterpiece with a bloated, look-at-me-I'm-the-king sequel, almost as if after a failure of some sort his colleagues have the balls to tell him to rein it in. *MGS 3* is a great example of this discretion: battling both your environment and the guards, it's the purest expression of the much-loved stealth 'infiltration' gameplay the series made

its name on. The version included here is the *Subsistence* edition, meaning that the new third-person camera is present, finally taking *MGS* out of the dark ages in terms of viewpoint and making it far easier to scout the terrain.

It also makes the already wonderful boss battles even better. *MGS* is famous for its bosses – colourful characters with unique back stories and methods for dispatching them – who break up the action brilliantly. As with everything in *MGS 3* they're better here than they ever have been: which other game can you adjust your PlayStation's internal clock to kill an elderly sniper? Or just skip the boss fight entirely by killing him earlier in the game? *MGS 3* rewards your imagination, and makes you raise your expectations of other games.

Speaking of expectations, for those graduating to the newest game in the series, *Peace Walker*, from *MGS 2* or *3*, prepare for a shock – the game is markedly different to incorporate the inherent stop-start playtime nature of the original platform, the PSP. Set in 1974 as Big Boss tries to find out what really happened to The Boss and build his private army, the game is broken down into short missions rather than a continuous engagement. These missions are classic *Metal Gear*, but with a difference: overall gameplay focuses on rescuing POWs or 'turning' guards to your side, and then sending them to 'Mother Base'. You then assign these troops to different specialities, such as the medical team or research and development, to boost your various divisions' capabilities. Get enough good people on the medical team and rations will increase in potency, for example, and R&D enables you to improve your weapons.

It's a strange mixture, but a good one. There's a strong, very *Metal Gear* narrative here for players that just want to blast through, and the overarching empire building game



Peace Walker's cut-scenes are incredibly well drawn, and interactive, too.



In this series



**Metal Gear Solid 4** Issue 167  
A great game no doubt, but hampered by its excesses. **92%**

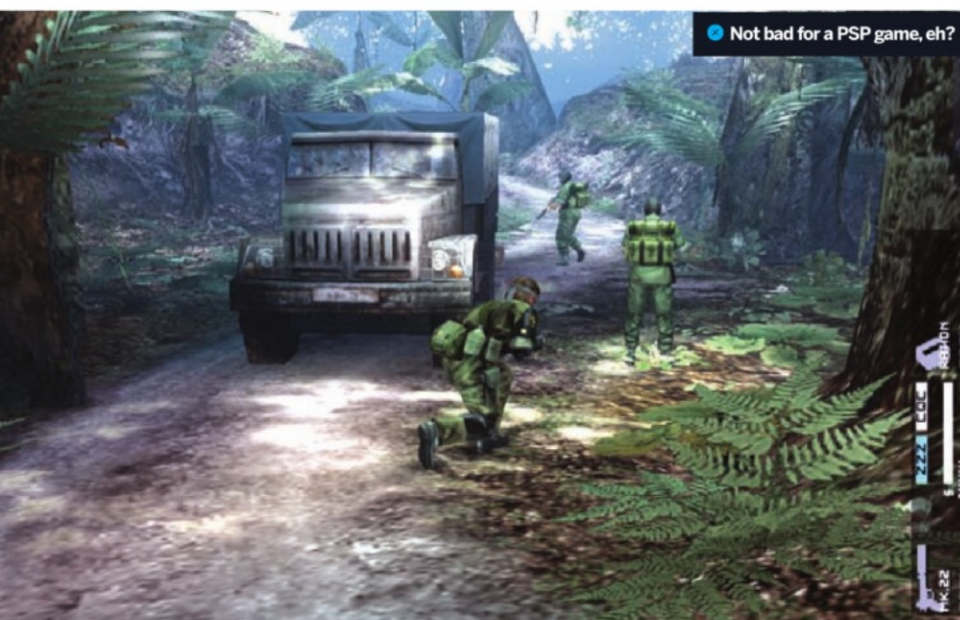




## EXTRA SOLID

The best versions of 2 and 3 anywhere

WHEN THE HD Collection was announced there was a lot of worrying about the content of the games, namely, would they be the original releases or the later, special edition reissues that in some cases change the games substantially? Thankfully, the answer is the latter. *Substance* and *Subsistence* are the basis for the conversions here, meaning you get *Sneak Eater*'s new camera plus a whole host of extras – from VR missions to alternate universe takes on *MGS 2* to even the original two *Metal Gear* games. You don't get Snakeboarding, though, although we're sure you'll live without that.



gets increasingly addictive as you see your base grow. Other elements have transferred less well. On the big console the bite-sized missions stand out more, and it's also a heavily co-op-focused game – up to four players are encouraged to get in on the sneaking missions, and it shows. With three friends it's great, but single players will tire quickly.

*MGS HD Collection* is a loving package, one of the very best of the current glut of HD reissues, but also a mixed one.

Steve Burns

## VERDICT

One of the greatest games of all time is in here, and for that and its new facelift it is worth the price of admission alone. Just bear in mind that the rest of the package is taken up by a PSP game that's better with friends, and a disappointing sequel.

91%

# PSN reviews



## ALL ZOMBIES MUST DIE!

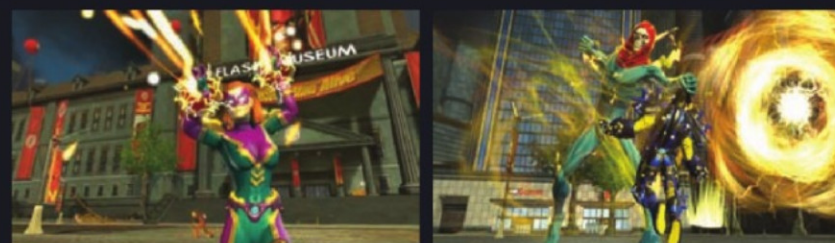
We've seen it all before

Publisher TBC Developer doublesix Price £7.99 Players 1-4 Genre Twin-stick shooter



DOUBLESIX GAMES RETURNS with this follow-up to 2009's *Burn Zombie Burn!* – it's another twin-stick shooter where you take your time beating, battering and shooting all manner of zombies and mutant buggers. RPG elements serve to draw out the experience more than you might expect, and the quirky story will raise at least a few smirks along the way. The problems come in two distinct flavours: one, it offers very little that hasn't been seen elsewhere (and it is just *another* zombie-based twin-stick shooter). Two, multiplayer, while welcome and fun, is local play only, with no online mode available. We live in the future – it's a surprising omission.

64%



## DC UNIVERSE: LIGHTNING STRIKES

It doesn't strike twice. It barely strikes once

Publisher SOE Developer In-house Price £7.99 Players MMO Genre MMORPG



WE'LL GET STRAIGHT to the point here. Unless you can summon meteors from the sky and shoot thunder from your arse (in *DC Universe* that is, not real life) then you've lost a big reason to buy *Lightning Strikes*. The missions centred around The Flash, the main selling point, are locked out to all but the highest of high-level players. The flipside is that the DLC gives you a new Electricity powerset to play around with but it pales in comparison to previous DLC *Fight For The Light*. That gave you Green Lantern powers such as attack choppers and mini-guns. This gives you electric fart clouds. *Lightning Strikes* will freshen up *DC Universe* for veterans but new players should avoid it altogether.

58%



## SONIC CD

The most Nineties game ever made

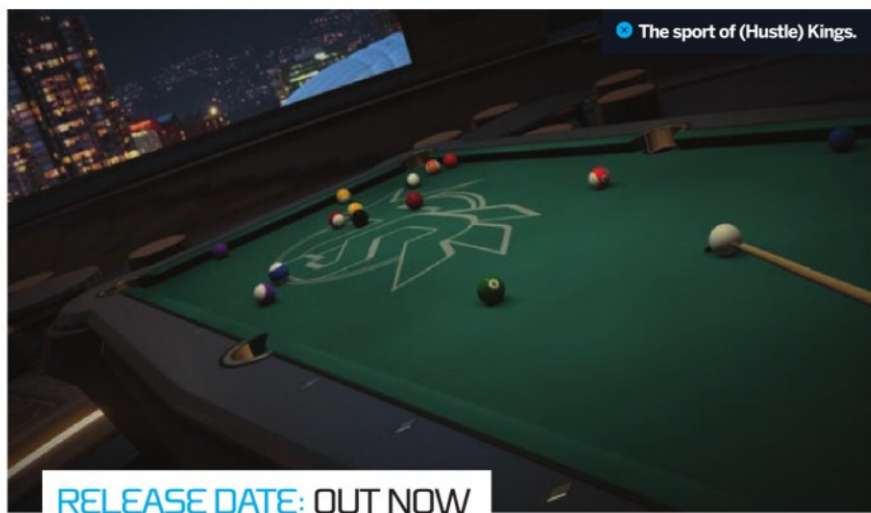
Publisher Sega Developer In-house Price £3.99 Players 1 Genre Platforming



WHEN PEOPLE SAY 'back when *Sonic* was good' before getting the knives out and carving the blue hedgehog's latest to shreds, this is the kind of game they're talking about. *Sonic Generations* is a notable exception, worthy of a few paper cuts rather than a full-on critical massacre, but *Sonic CD* really is a throwback to a long-lost era. The last proper, honest-to-goodness 2D *Sonic* that was fun before Sega lost its way with 3D, the time-travel gimmick in *Sonic CD* might stand out as unusual but everything else here is by the book – garishly great visuals, brilliant soundtrack, winding level design and smart Robotnik battles. Cheap as chips and wonderfully nostalgic, even for new players.

82%





# Puma After Hours Athletes



aka 'How To Make Three Decent Games Boring'



Publisher Sony Computer Entertainment Developer XDev Price £20.99 Players 1-8 Genre Sports Age Rating 3 Website [uk.playstation.com/afterhoursathletes/](http://uk.playstation.com/afterhoursathletes/) Twitter @PlayStationEU Facebook facebook.com/sonyplaystation

Puma (no idea why its name is on it) *After Hours Athletes* sees a compilation of three previously released PSN games: *High Velocity Bowling*, *Hustle Kings* (pool) and *Top Darts* – sports for fat people who like pubs, hence it being the perfect game for us here at **Play**. At least on paper. Let's tackle it by ripping it into three separate parts.

*Top Darts* is a simulation of the finest competition covered on Sky Sports: lobbing tungsten at cork. With Move control it should theoretically make things more like *actually* playing darts, but in practice it actually just makes things a bit strange. It works, no doubt, but there doesn't seem to be as much skill involved as you might expect. It's a bit easy, actually.

*High Velocity Bowling* has always used motion controls, except when it first came out it was using the Sixaxis in some horrible fashion. Now it's using Move in a way anyone who's played *Wii Sports*

Sports for fat people who like pubs, hence it being perfect for us here at **Play**

will remember. It's accurate, sure, but the game itself is just thoroughly dull.

*Hustle Kings* is still very pretty, showing us the shiny pool and snooker balls in Glorious 1080p, but while you might think it's perfectly suited to Move, it just isn't. Inaccuracy and oversensitivity make you constantly wonder why you aren't just using a pad – thus entirely defeating the object of using motion control at all.

Ian Dransfield

## VERDICT

Adding motion control to an existing bunch of half-decent games hasn't done much good. In fact, it's really not worth the bother and is pretty ignorable to be honest.

58%



RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

# Shin Megami Tensei: Persona 2: Innocent Sin



Nazis, demons, and high school: Growing up is a bitch



Publisher Ghostlight Developer Atlus Price £29.99 Players 1 Genre JRPG Age Rating 12 Website <http://tinyurl.com/smtp2is> Twitter @AtlusUSA Facebook facebook.com/GhostlightGames

The *Persona* series is known for its contemporary settings, atypical cast and downright crazy plotlines. Boasting a roster that includes both demonical jokers and the Führer himself, *Innocent Sin* first came to audiences in 1999, and has taken a massive 11 years to finally get an official English translation.

It is difficult being a teen at Seven Sisters High School: students are summoning otherworldly creatures to grant their wishes, rumours are becoming true and on top of this, the school's emblem has been cursed. Don't you hate it when that happens?

*Persona 2* is a rare mix between traditional JRPG systems and the developer's contemporary additions to the genre. The leading light in this game is the storyline, which – through cut-scenes and talking heads – twists, turns and always dances upon the edge of insanity.

But aside from an intriguing plot, there is little else to recommend. The combat system holds interesting ideas, but the encounter rate becomes infuriating; the pacing of the experience also becomes a problem with jamming (X) accounting for 90 per cent of the experience; and, in short, the genre has



refined, and innovated, in the decade preceding this remake, making this belated release redundant.

Revolutionary in its PSone heyday, there are still appealing ideas at work in *Innocent Sin*, but with many sequels and spin-offs pawing for attention, your time is best spent elsewhere. Fans of the series will find a fascinating story, but those unfamiliar to *Persona* might want to give this one a miss.

Adam Tingle

## VERDICT

An interesting story, but a delay between localisation and its initial release has made this once-revolutionary JRPG a rather tame experience.

*Innocent Sin* will appeal to series fans, but little else.

65%







RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

# The Legend Of Heroes Trails In The Sky



Fantasy settings, side-swept fringes and cutesy teens



Publisher Ghostlight Developer Falcom Price £29.99 Players 1 Genre JRPG Age Rating 12 Website [www.trailsinthesky.com](http://www.trailsinthesky.com) Twitter @nihonfalcom Facebook [facebook.com/NihonFalcom](http://facebook.com/NihonFalcom)

We might be days away from the Vita, but that isn't stopping the PSP's attempts at creating a fine library of JRPG titles. *Trails in the Sky* is the latest Japanese conversion to hit our shelves, and with seven years in the making, this one may have been a little too long in the translation incubator.

What we have here is another fantasy adventure, steeped in the traditions of a somewhat static genre. The cutesy, teenage characters are present in the form of adopted siblings Joshua and Estelle, and so too is the grandiose plot of humble beginnings leading to a worldwide quest to vanquish evil.

As with any JRPG title, the focus of the experience is a half and half split between story and brawling. The plot of *Trails In The Sky*, while slightly derivative, is engaging, and the combat has enough new additions to allow for a faster, and more interesting, experience than is common.

And if you do become weary of talking head plots and linear missions, there are also a number of side-quests to play through, as well as "orbament" crafting (stat/skill increases) and cooking.

At its core, *Trails In The Sky* is another familiar take on the same old mechanics, but that doesn't mean it isn't enjoyable. With plenty of things to do, and with well over 20 hours of gameplay to occupy your attention, this game will quench the thirst of any Buster Sword-loving JRPG fan.

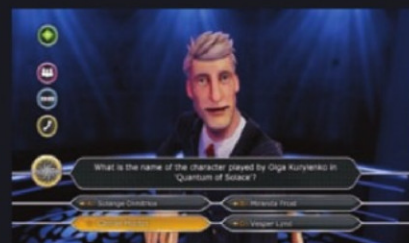
Adam Tingle

## VERDICT

An interesting story, with plenty of activities and missions to lose yourself in. It may lack originality, and it won't convert those that have no interest in the genre, but it is a pleasant last hoorah for your PSP.

75%

# PSN reviews



## WHO WANTS TO BE A MILLIONAIRE?

Ask the audience, they'll give the same score

Publisher Deep Silver Developer doublesix Price £7.99 Players 1-4 Genre Quiz



IT'S QUITE GOOD. That would be our definitive review of *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?*, a game that will never contend with the *Uncharted*s and *Killzones* of this world but does its thing well enough. Doublesix would presumably like us to say "it's quite good for parties!" as well, rather than "playing the Fastest Finger round on your own is pretty depressing BANG" but we digress. The format here is the same as the show, minus the tension of real money being involved, but you do get a Trophy for getting all 15 questions right and you can't buy those! (Note: you can. It's called *Terminator Salvation*.) The *South Park* expansion theme is cutesy fun too. All in all, a surprisingly good effort.

79%



## ODDWORLD: STRANGER'S WRATH HD

Don't be a stranger

Publisher EA Developer Just Add Water Price £9.99 Players 1 Genre FPS



THIS IS BRILLIANT. But of course you know that, because anyone who's anyone knows someone who will mention over and over again how good *Oddworld: Stranger's Wrath* is. To summarise: it's an FPS with bounty-hunting, deliciously inventive weapons, a gorgeous setting (even if HD shine can't quite hide the aged textures) and the best set of characters you'll ever meet. This is probably the only time we'd use the word 'charming' and not hate ourselves for it, such is the personality on show. *Stranger's Wrath* is slightly tattered and torn from age but this proves that excellence in the genre isn't always found through building a bigger and better arsenal of weapons.

86%



## JURASSIC PARK: THE GAME

Left. Then right. Then left

Publisher Telltale Developer Traveller's Tales Price £15.99 Players 1 Genre Puzzle



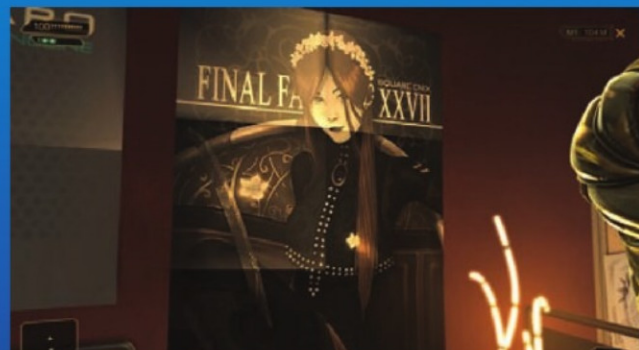
YOU'D THINK A game about dinosaurs would involve a desperate, tense and exciting struggle for survival because dinosaurs eat 78 people a day, or whatever it was that history lessons taught us. What it wouldn't involve are QTEs to walk up a hill. QTE for the left foot. Then for the right! Then the left. Then the right! It's not like we're being grumpy about one section either – the entire game is constructed around QTEs, none of which are exciting and none of which are warranted. It's a shame to see Telltale Games pump out such drivel given the studio's talent but its skill lies in crafting puzzle games. Given the bizarre action/puzzle/QTE mess here, maybe puzzle games are what it should stick with.

32%



# 38 OF THE BEST PS3 SECRETS OF 2011

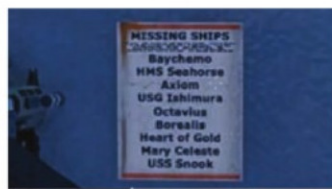
2011 has been an amazing year for videogames, and an even better one for Easter eggs. From *Dead Space 2* to *Modern Warfare 3*, the biggest hitters have all thrown shout outs to seemingly everything. Here's the best of a very good bunch



## 1. DEUS EX: HUMAN REVOLUTION

### FINAL FANTASY XXVII POSTER

■ Now that Square is publishing *Deus Ex* it was obvious there would be a reference to *Final Fantasy* somewhere. That somewhere is in Frank Pritchard's office. Just take a look around to find this poster.



## 2. SAINTS ROW: THE THIRD

### USS ISHIMURA

■ *Dead Space*'s USS Ishimura is present on a list of missing ships by a cargo container.



## 3. HOMEFRONT

### REAL QR CODE

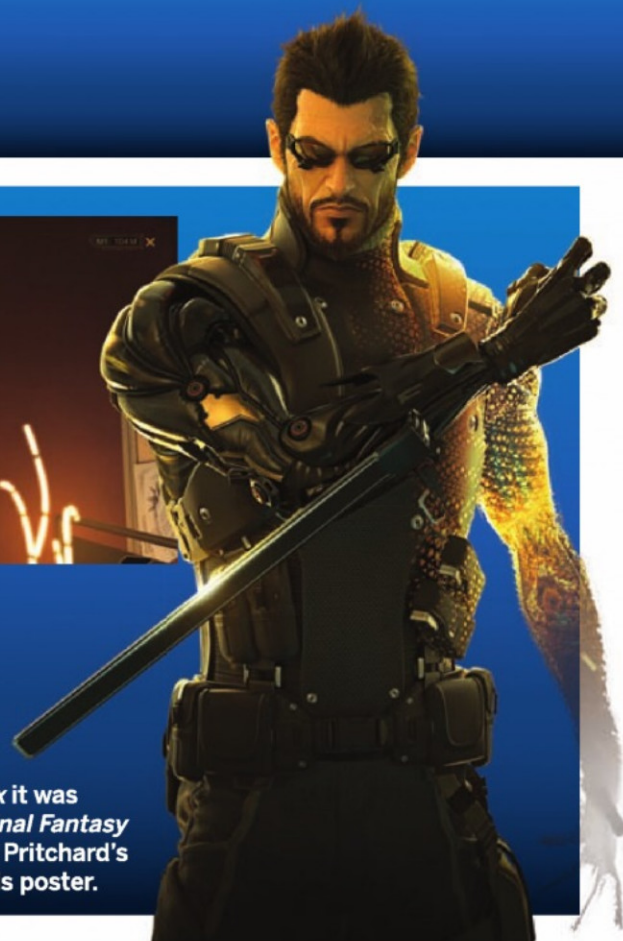
■ In the second level there's a QR code in one of the houses you enter (after the scene with the crying baby). Scan it with your smartphone to receive a detailed, 17-page PDF on the conception and execution of the Koreans' plans to irradiate the Mississippi, a key part of the invasion.



## 4. WWE ALL STARS

### JR AND THE KING SOUNDBITES

■ If you leave your fighters idle, JR and The King will relay unusual, character-specific soundbites regarding their style, history and so on.



## 5. RESISTANCE 3

### HYDRA TANK BOSS TOY

■ In the game's final cutscene, the main character's infant son is playing with a toy of the Hydra Tank Boss from Insomniac's other franchise, *Ratchet & Crank: A Crack In Time*.



## 6. CRYISIS 2

### DANCING QUEENS

■ In Chapter 7 you'll come across a power box behind a VIP rope. Hold down the use button until it lights up, run back to the elevators, leap over the ropes and go to the far elevator. Then cringe.





## 11-14. THE ELDER SCROLLS V: SKYRIM

### THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

■ If you go to Bleakcoast Cave you'll encounter a snow troll, a skeleton hung upside down and a sword in the snow below it. This is a reference to the Wampa scene in *The Empire Strikes Back*.



### HEADLESS HORSEMAN

■ Though there's no way of prompting it, a headless horseman can appear while exploring outside. This is a nod to *The Legend Of Sleepy Hollow* and if you follow the horseman, he'll lead you to a chest.



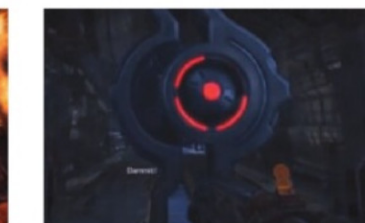
### THREE BILLY GOATS GRUFF

■ When heading to Hag Rock Redoubt, you'll pass a bridge with three goats on top of it. Living underneath the bridge? A dead troll. This is a reference to the children's story *Three Billy Goats Gruff*.



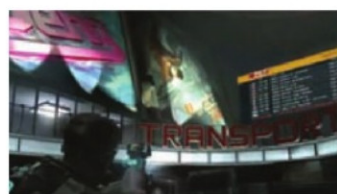
### EXCALIBUR?

■ There's a pond at the North of Bleakwind Basin, with a skeletal hand holding a sword aloft. This is a reference to *Excalibur* and the hand in the lake which caught the sword when it was being thrown away.



### 7. BATTLEFIELD 3 MIRROR'S EDGE

■ In the underground section of the Metro map there's a locked gate with a door on the other side. By the door is the courier bag used by Faith in *Mirror's Edge*. Also note this poster in the first mission after you smash into the train.



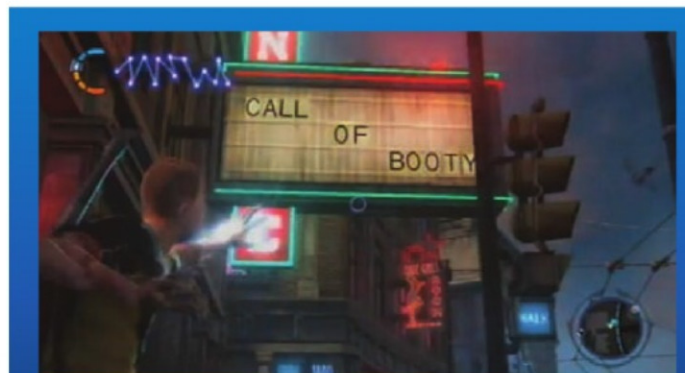
### 8. DEAD SPACE 2 SKATE 3000

■ Go to the transport hub and check out the massive advertising boards to see an ad for 'Skate 3000'. Sadly for Visceral, however, we're unlikely to get a *Skate 4*, let alone 3000.



### 9. DAYTONA USA VIRTUA FIGHTER'S JEFFRY

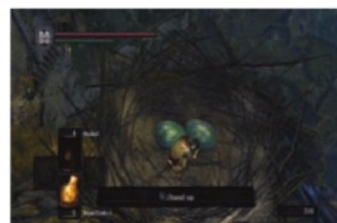
■ On the expert stage, stop in front of the statue of *Virtua Fighter's* Jeffry and press **A** to make him rotate.



## 10. INFAMOUS 2

### CALL OF BOOTY

■ Ever wondered what movies are hot in New Marais? Look no further than the matinees littered around: 'Call Of Booty'? 'Uncharted Love'? There's also a reference to Xbox with a shop called Red Ring Electronics.



### 15. DARK SOULS BACK TO THE START

■ In the ruins above the first bonfire is a nest. Curl up inside it and wait to be taken back to the tutorial area.



### 16. THE LAST OF US FIRST EVER SIGHTING

■ In *Uncharted 3*, check the newspaper lying in the pub of the opening level. It's the first ever nod towards *The Last Of Us*!



### 17. MOTORSTORM APOCALYPSE SPYDER

■ The character Cutter is heavily based on the journalist and author of *Fear And Loathing In Las Vegas*, Hunter S Thompson.

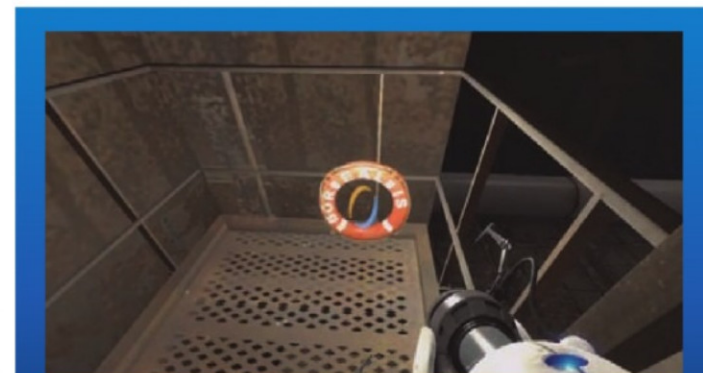


### 18. RESIDENT EVIL 4 HD YOU PERVERT

■ If you look up Ashley's skirt while she's climbing a ladder, she'll be understandably less than impressed.

### 19. BULLETSTORM RED RING OF DEATH

■ In the first area of the ship, a door malfunctions. In a dig at Microsoft the door displays a Red Ring Of Death sign.

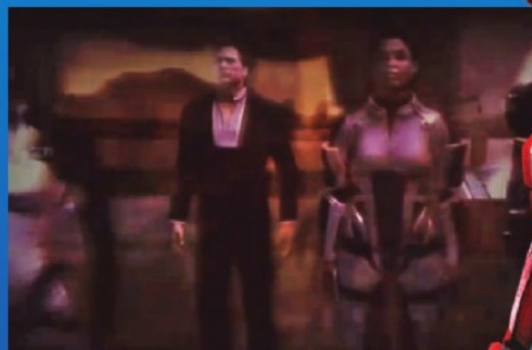


## 20. PORTAL 2

### HALF-LIFE 2 SHIP

■ The empty drydock of the ill-fated ship Borealis, cut from the proposed opening of *Half-Life 2* and mentioned in the episodes, is present in the Seventies section of the Aperture Science facility.





## 21. MASS EFFECT 2

### 48 HOURS LATER

■ Another brilliant entry. Ever wondered what happens if you leave the real-time, countdown-to-the-Reapers arriving clock to run down from 48 hours to nothing in the Arrival DLC? Wonder no more. Just take a look at this nightmare fuel.



## 22. PORTAL 2

### RADIO RAHEEM

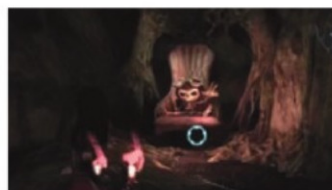
■ The radio you take out of the bin near Rat Man's hideout in Chapter 2 is playing an instrumental version of *Portal*'s credits theme 'Still Alive'.



## 24. DIRT 3

### PLAY IT BACK

■ While at the back of the grid honk your horn as much as you like. When you pass the spectators later on they'll play it back to you.



## 25. ALICE: MADNESS RETURNS

### RETURN OF PSYCHONAUTS

■ On Chapter 4, after shrinking yourself into a keyhole, look around carefully and you'll find Raz from *Psychonauts* sitting on a throne.



## 23. L.A. NOIRE

### DOFFING CAP TO RED DEAD

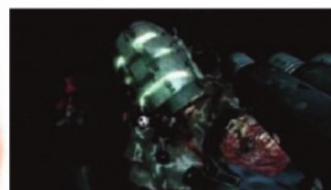
■ Poor John Marston. Not only was he – spoiler – killed according to The Silk Stocking Murder mission but it also turns out that his hat has been stolen, stomped and thrown in a bin.



## 26. RED FACTION ARMAGEDDON

### SAINTS ROW'S SHAUNDI

■ There's a radio tag from *Saints Row*'s Shaundi to be found in the irradiated zone. It's in the southeastern corner.



## 27. DUKE NUKEM FOREVER

### ONE DEAD SPACE MARINE

■ In The Hive, Duke finds a dead body which looks awfully similar to *Dead Space*'s hero Isaac Clarke right down to the mask, prompting him to say "that's one dead space marine".



## 28. DRIVER: SAN FRANCISCO

### BACK TO THE FUTURE

■ Unlock the DeLorean by beating Sprint Activity 1, then drive at – yes, you guessed it – 88mph for a few seconds to unlock the first level from the original *Driver*.



## 29. ULTIMATE MARVEL VS CAPCOM 3

### FOUL-MOUTHED ROCKET RACCOON

■ Our personal favourite. Get teams with Rocket Raccoon and Chris Redfield on opposite sides and have Rocket deliver the KO blow. Then enjoy his foul-mouthed take on Chris... lack of professionalism.



## 30. ASSASSIN'S CREED REVELATIONS

### MONTY PYTHON QUOTE

■ In The Brawler mission, you can hear *Monty Python* quote "we'll call it a draw, alright?".



## 31. BATTLEFIELD 3: BACK TO KARKAND

### SEQUEL HINT?

■ The DLC contains this 2143 marking on a crater. First hint at *Battlefield 2142* sequel?



## 32. BATMAN: ARKHAM CITY

### SCARECROW RETURNS

■ Want to know what Scarecrow's been up to since *Arkham Asylum*? Head to the boat pictured, use the encryption key and take a good look at the tied up inmate in the corner. Closer. Closer...

01



● You want to land on the boat nearest to Joker's side of Arkham City.

02



● Hack the far cover on the boat with the password CITYOFTERROR.

03



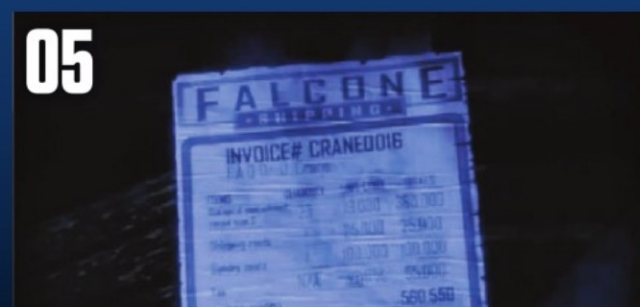
● You'll be forced into first-person view when inside the boat.

04

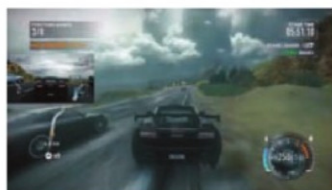


● He's the only sign of life in the boat apart from the insects...

05



● And here it is – an invoice to Mr Crane, or as we know him... Scarecrow.



### 33. NEED FOR SPEED: THE RUN DINOSAURS LIVE

■ Keep your eyes on the skies in the Badlands Park stage for a Pterodactyl. Yes.



### 34. MASS EFFECT 2 DRAGON AGE STATUE

■ On Kasumi's loyalty mission, you'll find a statue modelled after a *Dragon Age* ogre in Hock's vault. Look out for the Statue of Liberty head, too.



## 35. MODERN WARFARE 3

### LEV KRAVCHENKO ALIVE

■ Thought *Black Ops* villain Lev Kravchenko was dead? He is, as evidenced in the cutscene for the mission Back On The Grid. See? Infinity Ward and Activision can play nice.



## 36. UNCHARTED 3: DRAKE'S DECEIT

### CAMEO BY SACKBOY

■ When Drake is talking to Chloe after Chapter 9, look for Sackboy hanging from the windscreen.



### 37. DEAD ISLAND JASON'S CHAINSAW

■ *Friday The 13th*'s Jason can be found in the Jungle. If you kill him, you can even steal his trademark chainsaw.



## 38. DEAD RISING 2: OFF THE RECORD

### GRIM END FOR KATY

■ Head into the first room on your left when the zombie outbreak hits for a grim hint as to what happened to Chuck Greene's daughter Katy...

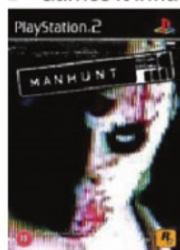


## RETRO ON PSN... They're old but are they any good?



# Manhunt

• Release date November 2003 • Publisher Rockstar • Developer Rockstar North  
• Games it influenced Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas



**LOOKING BACK ON** the media controversy surrounding *Manhunt*, it's almost impossible not to laugh. Of course the game inspired one man to kill the entire continent of Europe, Mr *Daily Mail*. Of course

playing as a man forced against his will to carry out wanton acts of violence will transfer over to real life and make us all babbling lunatics incapable of distinguishing real life from our PlayStation 2s. Of course the government of New Zealand banned the game and made it a crime to own it.

Oh wait. That last one's actually true.

In reality, outside of the demented skulls of national newspaper editors eager to get a story, *Manhunt* is actually quite an interesting game, and not just for its impact on *GTA: San Andreas*'s mechanics. It's a game where you're encouraged, like in most titles, to commit fiendish acts of brutality, and it might be the only one we can think of where doing that feels, well, wrong.

The setup is simple: you play as James Earl Cash, a death row inmate whose execution has been elaborately staged. Cash's new fate is far worse than death, however: he's been 'bought' from the corrupt cops of Carcer City to appear in a series of snuff films for a notorious underground video company, helmed by the sinister Lionel Starkweather. Cash – dropped into a *Running Man*-style city filled with cameras and various gangs – has to follow the twisted instructions of Starkweather if he has any chance of making it out alive.

Which is the crux of why *Manhunt* is so interesting, and why all of the nonsense about it being for latent serial killers is bullshit. A stealth game, players spend most of their

time creeping around in the shadows, luring the individual 'hunters' that comprise the gangs away from the pack to take them down individually. For about half of the game you'll be doing so with various low-tech tools – plastic bag, baseball bat, cleaver and so on.

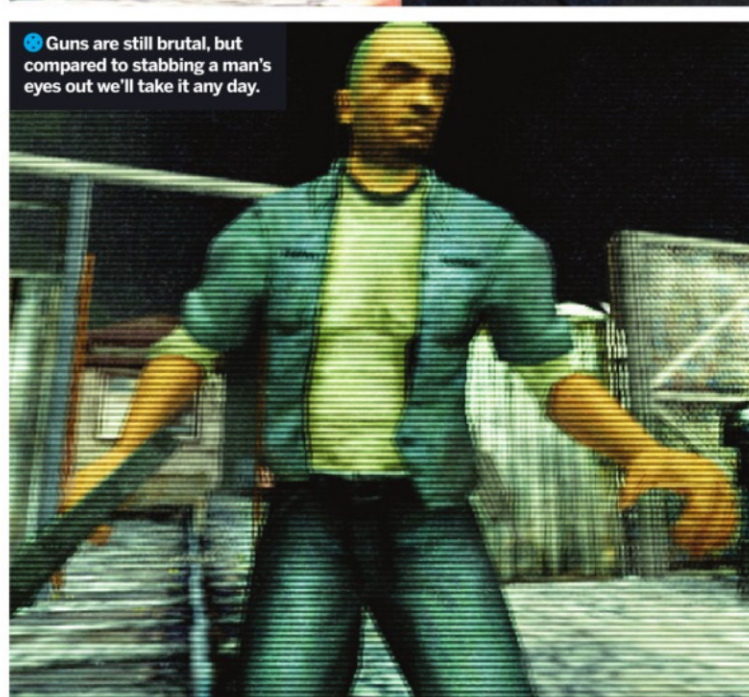
Sneaking up behind a hunter gives you two options: the first is taking out the target with a quick and brutal execution. The second, activated by holding down the kill button for longer (and of course increasing your chances of detection) results in stronger execution kill that's generally so over the top it's obscene.

And here's where *Manhunt* excels: those harsh kills are so violent that any sane person will stop using them immediately. One in particular, sees players stabbing a guy in the eyes with a shard of glass. You don't want to do it, but you're forced to by the omnipotent Starkweather in order to continue. When you get your hands on firearms it's a massive relief. Thing is, your score is directly related to the strength of your kills, so you're actually having to make the choice between excellence and moral dubiousness.

This is something that its own sequel, the turgid *Manhunt 2*, got wrong, and is testament to the game's excellent setup – in the sequel you're killing for fun, not because you have to – and superbly atmospheric music and stage design amplifying the tension. The stealth and targeting mechanics would end up in *San Andreas*, but *Manhunt* deserves to be remembered for more than that. It has its flaws, particularly with the AI, but it's more than the sum of its parts.

### WHAT WE SAID: Issue 111 • 30%

Disturbingly we gave this 30% in the bad old days (issue 111) when *Play* had no taste.

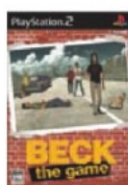




## NEVER COMING TO PSN #3



## Beck: The Game



- Release date 2005
- Developer Flagship

**WE CAN'T QUITE** believe this actually exists, so if it doesn't and **Play** has finally snapped, please do let us know.

Sadly, we reckon that this was actually produced and is a real thing, and as you'd expect it's a Beck-flavoured rhythm-action game: filled with music and videos depicting crazy collaborations with film stars, inspired mixes of genres and the general feeling that Beck is too cool for not only school, but *all* learning institutions. He's just that good.

Except it's kind of not – rather than the aforementioned collection of Beck's weird philosophical ramblings on being

a wealthy rich kid, it's a game that instead asks players to tap out weird elevator muzak while typically Japanese anime portraits of people flash up. Granted, there's every chance this could be just another of Beck's 'ker-azy' Nineties videos (remember the one for *Sexx Laws* with Jack Black? No? YouTube that, immediately) that we missed, but we're sure we would have remembered something *that* bad.

Which leads us to believe that maybe this doesn't have anything to do with the real Beck, or that we have, as previously stated, maybe imagined this whole sorry saga. If you or anyone you know has been affected by the situations described in this boxout, please don't contact us, as we'll be hiding in the **Play** nuclear bunker, mumbling something about turntables and *Kuma Uta*.

## TEN-YEAR PLANS ACCORDING TO PLAYSTATION

**LISTEN TO US** now, proles. The PlayStation 3 absolutely will have a ten-year life cycle. That's right, in ten years' time, you'll still be playing on this machine. Having said that, if Microsoft launches a new console before then you better believe we'll have another one out. Just saying.



## WE COULD HAVE DONE WITHOUT...

## Arctic Thunder

**WAY BACK IN** ye olden days of 2001 Midway was still a thing. And while it was still a thing, before its legacy of making awful games forced it into bankruptcy, it pumped out awful games like this, one of the lowest-scoring games in **Play** with a colossal 13%.

The reason it received such a terribly low mark? You cretin, there are many, *many* reasons, including but not

limited to the fact that the game practically plays itself, the frame rate judders more than a Paul Greengrass *Bourne* movie shot by an epileptic giraffe, it looks and plays nowhere near as well as the roaring beast that is the arcade game of the same name and is generally completely woeful right across the board.

Did you play this? We'd say we hated you, but it's clear you hate yourself far more than we ever could.

## RETRO GAMES WE SAID WE WANT TO PLAY AGAIN BUT PROBABLY WON'T



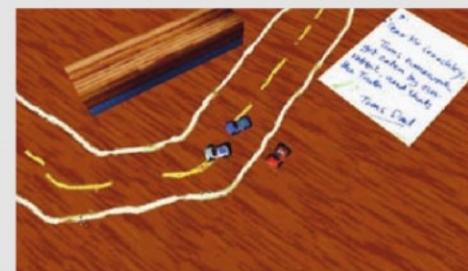
## Death By Degrees

**NOT BECAUSE IT** was good, of course. The opposite: that it was a bizarre *Tekken* spin-off universally derided for being incredi-shat gives it an alluring appeal. But then we remember that it was absolute guff and leave it at that.



## Pandemonium

**AT THE TIME** of release (1996) *Pandemonium* was thought of as PlayStation's answer to *Super Mario 64*. It wasn't, of course, because that game is one of the best and most important ever, and this was just good ol' *Pandemonium*.



## Micro Machines V3

**BACK IN 'THE DAY'** (1997) we used to play the ass out of this, getting rather too competitive during lunchtimes and generally saying things to our managers in the heat of the moment we would go on to regret. Now, it all seems rather silly. Then: deadly serious. *War-level* serious.



## Rival Schools

**WITH THE FIGHTING** genre now back in a big way, some members of **Play** have been thinking about the fighters they played in their youth, getting all nostalgia-eyed in the process. Then the subject of *Rival Schools* came up, and everyone shrugged and went nahhhhhhhhhhhhh.



# PLAY#x Playlist

If you want to know what a game scored then these pages are for you

## GAME UNDER

Stock photography, fictitious stories, real lives...

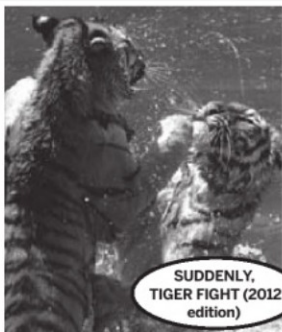
SUDDENLY...



Oi, it's 2012 now. Think of something new.



Look, if you're going to do this at least make it more exciting for the world of the future, which is where we now live.



SUDDENLY, TIGER FIGHT (2012 edition)

## PS3 LISTING



| game                                                                                                                                      | issue      | score      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| 3D Collection                                                                                                                             | 195        | 75%        |
| <b>3D Dot Game Heroes</b>                                                                                                                 | <b>192</b> | <b>87%</b> |
| 50 Cent: Blood On The Sand                                                                                                                | 177        | 70%        |
| <b>Ace Combat: Assault Horizon</b>                                                                                                        | <b>211</b> | <b>78%</b> |
| Afro Samurai                                                                                                                              | 177        | 61%        |
| <b>Agarest: Generations Of War</b>                                                                                                        | <b>187</b> | <b>78%</b> |
| Agarest: Generations Of War Zero                                                                                                          | 209        | 52%        |
| <b>Air Conflicts: Secret Wars</b>                                                                                                         | <b>208</b> | <b>58%</b> |
| Alice: Madness Returns                                                                                                                    | 207        | 57%        |
| <b>Aliens Vs Predator</b>                                                                                                                 | <b>189</b> | <b>79%</b> |
| Alone In The Dark                                                                                                                         | 173        | 70%        |
| <b>Alpha Protocol</b>                                                                                                                     | <b>193</b> | <b>83%</b> |
| Ape Escape                                                                                                                                | 208        | 55%        |
| <b>Arcana Heart 3</b>                                                                                                                     | <b>207</b> | <b>79%</b> |
| Armored Core For Answer                                                                                                                   | 173        | 65%        |
| <b>Armored Core 4</b>                                                                                                                     | <b>153</b> | <b>67%</b> |
| Army Of Two                                                                                                                               | 164        | 80%        |
| <b>Army Of Two: The 40th Day</b>                                                                                                          | <b>188</b> | <b>65%</b> |
| Ar Tonelico Qoga: Knell Of Ar Ciel                                                                                                        | 203        | 27%        |
| <b>Ashes Cricket 2009</b>                                                                                                                 | <b>183</b> | <b>30%</b> |
| Assassin's Creed                                                                                                                          | 161        | 58%        |
| <b>Assassin's Creed II</b>                                                                                                                | <b>186</b> | <b>89%</b> |
| <b>Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood</b>                                                                                                      | <b>199</b> | <b>91%</b> |
| More than enough additions to take the Assassin's Creed formula into modern classic territory.                                            |            |            |
| Assassin's Creed Revelations                                                                                                              | 212        | 75%        |
| <b>Atelier Rorona: The Alchemist Of Arland</b>                                                                                            | <b>198</b> | <b>77%</b> |
| Backbreaker                                                                                                                               | 193        | 70%        |
| <b>Band Hero</b>                                                                                                                          | <b>187</b> | <b>68%</b> |
| Batman: Arkham Asylum                                                                                                                     | 183        | 85%        |
| <b>Batman: Arkham City</b>                                                                                                                | <b>211</b> | <b>94%</b> |
| Rocksteady's sequel to the excellent Arkham Asylum is a serious contender for game of the year.                                           |            |            |
| <b>Battle Fantasia</b>                                                                                                                    | <b>176</b> | <b>67%</b> |
| Battlefield: Bad Company                                                                                                                  | 168        | 78%        |
| <b>Battlefield: Bad Company 2</b>                                                                                                         | <b>190</b> | <b>93%</b> |
| Single-player is fairly impressive but take it online and it's bordering on genius. This is quite possibly the best shooter on PS3 today. |            |            |
| Battlefield 3                                                                                                                             | 212        | 88%        |
| <b>Bayonetta*</b>                                                                                                                         | <b>187</b> | <b>93%</b> |
| Beijing 2008                                                                                                                              | 168        | 54%        |
| <b>Beowulf</b>                                                                                                                            | <b>161</b> | <b>61%</b> |
| Bionic Commando                                                                                                                           | 179        | 82%        |
| <b>BioShock</b>                                                                                                                           | <b>172</b> | <b>93%</b> |
| BioShock 2                                                                                                                                | 189        | 88%        |
| <b>BlackSite</b>                                                                                                                          | <b>163</b> | <b>43%</b> |
| Bladestorm: The Hundred Years' War                                                                                                        | 160        | 58%        |
| <b>BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger</b>                                                                                                         | <b>190</b> | <b>85%</b> |
| <b>BlazBlue: Continuum Shift</b>                                                                                                          | <b>198</b> | <b>94%</b> |
| <b>Blazing Angels</b>                                                                                                                     | <b>151</b> | <b>54%</b> |
| Bleach: Soul Resurrección                                                                                                                 | 209        | 63%        |
| <b>Blitz: The League II</b>                                                                                                               | <b>172</b> | <b>67%</b> |
| Blur                                                                                                                                      | 193        | 86%        |
| <b>Bodycount</b>                                                                                                                          | <b>210</b> | <b>54%</b> |
| Borderlands                                                                                                                               | 185        | 80%        |
| <b>Brink</b>                                                                                                                              | <b>206</b> | <b>67%</b> |
| Brothers In Arms: Hell's Highway                                                                                                          | 171        | 75%        |
| <b>Brütal Legend</b>                                                                                                                      | <b>185</b> | <b>79%</b> |
| Bulletstorm                                                                                                                               | 203        | 86%        |
| <b>Burnout Paradise</b>                                                                                                                   | <b>162</b> | <b>74%</b> |
| Buzz!: Quiz TV                                                                                                                            | 168        | 82%        |
| <b>Buzz! Quiz World</b>                                                                                                                   | <b>185</b> | <b>70%</b> |
| Call Of Duty 3                                                                                                                            | 151        | 77%        |
| <b>Call Of Duty: World At War</b>                                                                                                         | <b>173</b> | <b>68%</b> |
| Call Of Duty 4: Modern Warfare                                                                                                            | 160        | 88%        |
| <b>Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 2</b>                                                                                                     | <b>186</b> | <b>94%</b> |

| game                                                                                                                   | issue      | score      |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| <b>Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 3</b>                                                                                  | <b>212</b> | <b>88%</b> |
| <b>Call Of Duty: Black Ops</b>                                                                                         | <b>199</b> | <b>94%</b> |
| Treyarch's first genuinely brilliant entry to the series and a standard-bearer for fast-paced online shooters.         |            |            |
| Call Of Juarez: Bound In Blood                                                                                         | 181        | 85%        |
| <b>Call Of Juarez: The Cartel</b>                                                                                      | <b>208</b> | <b>30%</b> |
| Captain America: Super Soldier                                                                                         | 208        | 70%        |
| <b>Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow</b>                                                                                    | <b>197</b> | <b>85%</b> |
| Carnival Island                                                                                                        | 213        | 53%        |
| <b>Cars 2</b>                                                                                                          | <b>208</b> | <b>68%</b> |
| Catherine*                                                                                                             | 204        | 48%        |
| <b>Champion Jockey</b>                                                                                                 | <b>210</b> | <b>50%</b> |
| Chronicles Of Riddick: Assault On Dark Athena                                                                          | 178        | 87%        |
| <b>Child Of Eden</b>                                                                                                   | <b>211</b> | <b>80%</b> |
| <b>Civilization Revolution</b>                                                                                         | <b>168</b> | <b>90%</b> |
| <b>Clash Of The Titans</b>                                                                                             | <b>193</b> | <b>65%</b> |
| Clive Barker's Jericho                                                                                                 | 159        | 84%        |
| <b>Colin McRae: DiRT</b>                                                                                               | <b>158</b> | <b>91%</b> |
| Colin McRae: DiRT 2                                                                                                    | 184        | 87%        |
| <b>Command &amp; Conquer: Red Alert 3</b>                                                                              | <b>178</b> | <b>65%</b> |
| Conan                                                                                                                  | 160        | 71%        |
| <b>Condemned 2</b>                                                                                                     | <b>165</b> | <b>78%</b> |
| Conflict: Denied Ops                                                                                                   | 164        | 50%        |
| <b>Create</b>                                                                                                          | <b>199</b> | <b>71%</b> |
| Cross Edge                                                                                                             | 182        | 59%        |
| <b>Crysis 2</b>                                                                                                        | <b>204</b> | <b>72%</b> |
| Damnation                                                                                                              | 181        | 38%        |
| <b>Dance Dance Revolution</b>                                                                                          | <b>201</b> | <b>52%</b> |
| Dante's Inferno                                                                                                        | 189        | 80%        |
| <b>Dark Sector</b>                                                                                                     | <b>165</b> | <b>62%</b> |
| <b>Dark Souls</b>                                                                                                      | <b>211</b> | <b>90%</b> |
| Sequel to one of the hardest games in recent times, Dark Souls is another superb release from developer From Software. |            |            |
| Dark Void                                                                                                              | 188        | 81%        |
| <b>Darksiders</b>                                                                                                      | <b>188</b> | <b>83%</b> |
| DC Universe Online                                                                                                     | 202        | 80%        |
| <b>de Blob 2</b>                                                                                                       | <b>203</b> | <b>65%</b> |
| Dead Island                                                                                                            | 210        | 79%        |
| <b>Dead Rising 2</b>                                                                                                   | <b>197</b> | <b>78%</b> |
| Dead Rising 2: Off The Record                                                                                          | 211        | 61%        |
| <b>Dead Space</b>                                                                                                      | <b>172</b> | <b>87%</b> |
| <b>Dead Space 2</b>                                                                                                    | <b>201</b> | <b>92%</b> |
| The point where the Dead Space series stepped up and became something to be genuinely excited about.                   |            |            |
| <b>Dead To Rights: Retribution</b>                                                                                     | <b>192</b> | <b>68%</b> |
| Def Jam: Icon                                                                                                          | 151        | 79%        |
| <b>Def Jam Rapstar</b>                                                                                                 | <b>199</b> | <b>72%</b> |
| <b>Demon's Souls</b>                                                                                                   | <b>193</b> | <b>92%</b> |
| <b>Destroy All Humans!: Path Of The Furon</b>                                                                          | <b>178</b> | <b>29%</b> |
| <b>Deus Ex: Human Revolution</b>                                                                                       | <b>209</b> | <b>91%</b> |
| Worries: unfounded. Fun: lots of it. True Deus Ex experience: confirmed. Boss battles: bloody awful.                   |            |            |
| Devil May Cry 4                                                                                                        | 163        | 89%        |
| <b>DiRT 3</b>                                                                                                          | <b>206</b> | <b>85%</b> |
| Disgaea 3: Absence Of Justice                                                                                          | 175        | 81%        |
| <b>DJ Hero</b>                                                                                                         | <b>186</b> | <b>91%</b> |
| It's just like playing Guitar Hero for the first time all over again, although DJ Hero is slightly more expensive.     |            |            |
| DJ Hero 2                                                                                                              | 198        | 88%        |
| <b>Dragon Age: Origins</b>                                                                                             | <b>186</b> | <b>82%</b> |
| Dragon Age II                                                                                                          | 203        | 86%        |
| <b>Dragon Ball: Raging Blast</b>                                                                                       | <b>186</b> | <b>40%</b> |
| Dragon Ball Z: Burst Limit                                                                                             | 168        | 61%        |
| <b>Driver: San Francisco</b>                                                                                           | <b>209</b> | <b>68%</b> |
| Duke Nukem Forever                                                                                                     | 207        | 33%        |
| <b>Dungeon Siege III</b>                                                                                               | <b>206</b> | <b>80%</b> |
| Dynasty Warriors: Gundam                                                                                               | 160        | 40%        |
| <b>Dynasty Warriors: Gundam 2</b>                                                                                      | <b>176</b> | <b>43%</b> |
| Dynasty Warriors: Gundam 3                                                                                             | 208        | 56%        |
| <b>Dynasty Warriors: Strikeforce</b>                                                                                   | <b>189</b> | <b>37%</b> |
| Dynasty Warriors 6                                                                                                     | 164        | 30%        |

| game                                                                                                                                   | issue      | score      |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| <b>Dynasty Warriors 6: Empires</b>                                                                                                     | <b>181</b> | <b>44%</b> |
| Dynasty Warriors 7                                                                                                                     | 204        | 32%        |
| <b>EA Sports Active 2</b>                                                                                                              | <b>200</b> | <b>81%</b> |
| EA Sports MMA                                                                                                                          | 198        | 89%        |
| <b>Eat Lead</b>                                                                                                                        | <b>178</b> | <b>38%</b> |
| EDF: Insect Armageddon                                                                                                                 | 208        | 64%        |
| <b>El Shaddai: Ascension Of The Metatron</b>                                                                                           | <b>208</b> | <b>77%</b> |
| Enchanted Arms                                                                                                                         | 152        | 69%        |
| <b>Enemy Territory: Quake Wars</b>                                                                                                     | <b>168</b> | <b>60%</b> |
| Enslaved: Odyssey To The West                                                                                                          | 197        | 83%        |
| <b>Eternal Sonata</b>                                                                                                                  | <b>176</b> | <b>87%</b> |
| Everybody's Golf 5*                                                                                                                    | 158        | 88%        |
| <b>Everybody's Golf: World Tour</b>                                                                                                    | <b>165</b> | <b>91%</b> |
| Eye Of Judgment                                                                                                                        | 159        | 65%        |
| <b>EyePet</b>                                                                                                                          | <b>185</b> | <b>83%</b> |
| EyePet: Move                                                                                                                           | 197        | 84%        |
| <b>F1 2010</b>                                                                                                                         | <b>197</b> | <b>86%</b> |
| F1 2011                                                                                                                                | 211        | 71%        |
| <b>FaceBreaker</b>                                                                                                                     | <b>170</b> | <b>55%</b> |
| Fairytale Fights                                                                                                                       | 186        | 51%        |
| <b>Fallout 3</b>                                                                                                                       | <b>173</b> | <b>97%</b> |
| Fallout 3 lives up to its promise and then some. It's a damning portrayal of the consequences of war, and a compelling RPG experience. |            |            |
| <b>Fallout: New Vegas</b>                                                                                                              | <b>198</b> | <b>88%</b> |
| Fantastic Four: Rise Of The Silver Surfer                                                                                              | 155        | 39%        |
| <b>Far Cry 2</b>                                                                                                                       | <b>172</b> | <b>74%</b> |
| F.E.A.R.                                                                                                                               | 151        | 81%        |
| <b>F.E.A.R. 2: Project Origin</b>                                                                                                      | <b>176</b> | <b>87%</b> |
| F.E.A.R. 3                                                                                                                             | 208        | 60%        |
| <b>FIFA 08</b>                                                                                                                         | <b>159</b> | <b>84%</b> |
| FIFA 09                                                                                                                                | 171        | 87%        |
| <b>FIFA 10</b>                                                                                                                         | <b>184</b> | <b>90%</b> |
| <b>FIFA 11</b>                                                                                                                         | <b>197</b> | <b>91%</b> |
| <b>FIFA 12</b>                                                                                                                         | <b>210</b> | <b>86%</b> |
| FIFA Street 3                                                                                                                          | 163        | 66%        |
| <b>FIFA World Cup 2010</b>                                                                                                             | <b>192</b> | <b>70%</b> |
| Fight Night Champion                                                                                                                   | 203        | 88%        |
| <b>Fight Night Round 3</b>                                                                                                             | <b>151</b> | <b>87%</b> |
| Fight Night Round 4                                                                                                                    | 181        | 84%        |
| <b>Final Fantasy XIII</b>                                                                                                              | <b>190</b> | <b>85%</b> |
| Fist Of The North Star: Ken's Rage                                                                                                     | 198        | 51%        |
| <b>Folklore</b>                                                                                                                        | <b>158</b> | <b>66%</b> |
| Formula One Championship Edition                                                                                                       | 151        | 72%        |
| <b>Fracture</b>                                                                                                                        | <b>171</b> | <b>72%</b> |
| Front Mission Evolved                                                                                                                  | 198        | 52%        |
| <b>Fuel</b>                                                                                                                            | <b>180</b> | <b>49%</b> |
| Full Auto 2: Battlelines                                                                                                               | 151        | 69%        |
| <b>G-Force</b>                                                                                                                         | <b>183</b> | <b>59%</b> |
| Genji: Days Of The Blade                                                                                                               | 151        | 38%        |
| <b>Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2</b>                                                                                               | <b>157</b> | <b>83%</b> |
| Ghostbusters: The Videogame                                                                                                            | 180        | 80%        |
| <b>GI Joe</b>                                                                                                                          | <b>183</b> | <b>22%</b> |
| <b>God Of War Collection*</b>                                                                                                          | <b>188</b> | <b>93%</b> |
| Two of the greatest PS2 action games of all time come together at a bargain price. Essential purchase.                                 |            |            |
| God Of War Collection: Volume II                                                                                                       | 210        | 70%        |
| <b>God Of War III</b>                                                                                                                  | <b>190</b> | <b>88%</b> |
| GoldenEye 007: Reloaded                                                                                                                | 213        | 63%        |
| <b>Gran Turismo 5</b>                                                                                                                  | <b>200</b> | <b>85%</b> |
| Gran Turismo 5 Prologue                                                                                                                | 165        | 75%        |
| <b>Grand Theft Auto IV</b>                                                                                                             | <b>166</b> | <b>98%</b> |
| Green Day: Rock Band                                                                                                                   | 194        | 77%        |
| <b>GTA: Episodes From Liberty City</b>                                                                                                 | <b>191</b> | <b>94%</b> |
| <b>Guitar Hero III</b>                                                                                                                 | <b>160</b> | <b>90%</b> |
| Guitar Hero III is another great rhythm-action beast, sure to delight fans and newcomers alike. So, grab a guitar and rock out!        |            |            |
| Guitar Hero 5                                                                                                                          | 184        | 81%        |
| <b>Guitar Hero: Aerosmith</b>                                                                                                          | <b>168</b> | <b>63%</b> |
| Guitar Hero Greatest Hits                                                                                                              | 182        | 76%        |
| <b>Guitar Hero Metallica</b>                                                                                                           | <b>179</b> | <b>88%</b> |
| Guitar Hero: Van Halen                                                                                                                 | 189        | 65%        |
| <b>Guitar Hero: Warriors Of Rock</b>                                                                                                   | <b>197</b> | <b>71%</b> |



# This month's new entries

The newest games, freshly squeezed among all your old favourites

Need For Speed: The Run **PS3**  
 Tekken Hybrid **PS3**  
 GoldenEye 007: Reloaded **PS3**  
 The Lord Of The Rings: War In The North **PS3**  
 Lego Harry Potter: Years 5-7 **PS3**  
 Carnival Island **PS3**  
 Medieval Moves **PS3**  
 The King Of Fighters XIII **PS3**

63% Payday: The Heist **PSN** 88%  
 79% Zombie Apocalypse: Never Die Alone **PSN** 69%  
 63% Worms Crazy Golf **PSN** 82%  
 42% Beat Hazard Ultra **PSN** 79%  
 67% PixelJunk SideScroller **PSN** 77%  
 53%  
 47%  
 76%

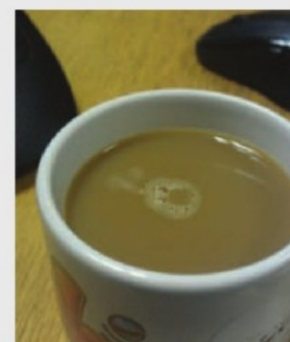
| game                                                                                                        | issue      | score      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| <b>Guitar Hero World Tour</b>                                                                               | <b>173</b> | <b>95%</b> |
| Harry Potter And The Deathly Hallows: Part 1                                                                | 200        | 21%        |
| <b>Harry Potter And The Deathly Hallows: Part 2</b>                                                         | <b>208</b> | <b>37%</b> |
| Harry Potter And The Half-Blood Prince                                                                      | 182        | 60%        |
| <b>Harry Potter: The Order Of The Phoenix</b>                                                               | <b>155</b> | <b>32%</b> |
| Haze                                                                                                        | 167        | 64%        |
| Heavenly Sword                                                                                              | 157        | 71%        |
| <b>Heavy Rain</b>                                                                                           | <b>189</b> | <b>94%</b> |
| <b>Heavy Rain: Move Edition</b>                                                                             | <b>198</b> | <b>70%</b> |
| Heroes Over Europe                                                                                          | 184        | 48%        |
| <b>Homefront</b>                                                                                            | <b>203</b> | <b>69%</b> |
| Hunted: The Demon's Forge                                                                                   | 207        | 59%        |
| <b>Hyperdimension Neptunia</b>                                                                              | <b>202</b> | <b>21%</b> |
| Ice Age 3: Dawn Of The Dinosaurs                                                                            | 182        | 47%        |
| <b>Ico &amp; Shadow Of The Colossus Classics HD</b>                                                         | <b>210</b> | <b>94%</b> |
| Largely ignored when they were first released, gamers can now enjoy these wonderful games in brilliant HD.  |            |            |
| IL-2 Sturmovik: Birds Of Prey                                                                               | 183        | 72%        |
| <b>inFamous</b>                                                                                             | <b>180</b> | <b>81%</b> |
| inFamous 2                                                                                                  | 207        | 83%        |
| <b>International Cricket 2010</b>                                                                           | <b>194</b> | <b>61%</b> |
| Iron Man                                                                                                    | 166        | 58%        |
| <b>Iron Man 2</b>                                                                                           | <b>193</b> | <b>50%</b> |
| Jak And Daxter: The Lost Frontier                                                                           | 187        | 59%        |
| <b>James Bond 007: Blood Stone</b>                                                                          | <b>199</b> | <b>63%</b> |
| James Cameron's Avatar: The Game                                                                            | 187        | 64%        |
| <b>John Daly's ProStroke Golf</b>                                                                           | <b>197</b> | <b>70%</b> |
| Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights                                                                                 | 159        | 78%        |
| <b>Just Cause 2</b>                                                                                         | <b>190</b> | <b>87%</b> |
| Kane & Lynch: Dead Men                                                                                      | 160        | 73%        |
| <b>Kane &amp; Lynch 2: Dog Days</b>                                                                         | <b>196</b> | <b>71%</b> |
| Katamari Forever                                                                                            | 184        | 88%        |
| <b>Killzone 2</b>                                                                                           | <b>176</b> | <b>93%</b> |
| Killzone 3                                                                                                  | 202        | 80%        |
| <b>Knights Contract</b>                                                                                     | <b>202</b> | <b>53%</b> |
| Kung Fu Panda 2                                                                                             | 207        | 20%        |
| <b>Kung Fu Rider</b>                                                                                        | <b>196</b> | <b>65%</b> |
| Lair                                                                                                        | 158        | 52%        |
| <b>L.A. Noire</b>                                                                                           | <b>206</b> | <b>91%</b> |
| Not perfect but Rockstar's new IP introduces pioneering facial-capture technology and interesting gameplay. |            |            |
| Last Rebellion                                                                                              | 191        | 42%        |
| <b>Legend Of Spyro: Dawn Of The Dragon</b>                                                                  | <b>174</b> | <b>54%</b> |
| Legendary                                                                                                   | 173        | 62%        |
| <b>Lego Batman</b>                                                                                          | <b>173</b> | <b>65%</b> |
| Lego Harry Potter: Years 1-4                                                                                | 194        | 79%        |
| <b>Lego Harry Potter: Years 5-7</b>                                                                         | <b>213</b> | <b>67%</b> |
| Lego Indiana Jones: The Original Adventures                                                                 | 167        | 73%        |
| <b>Lego Indiana Jones 2: The Adventure Continues</b>                                                        | <b>187</b> | <b>71%</b> |
| Lego Pirates Of The Caribbean                                                                               | 206        | 76%        |
| <b>Lego Rock Band</b>                                                                                       | <b>187</b> | <b>75%</b> |
| Lego Star Wars: The Complete Saga                                                                           | 160        | 76%        |
| <b>Lego Star Wars III: The Clone Wars</b>                                                                   | <b>204</b> | <b>79%</b> |
| Leisure Suit Larry: Box Office Bust                                                                         | 180        | 24%        |
| <b>LittleBigPlanet</b>                                                                                      | <b>172</b> | <b>94%</b> |
| <b>LittleBigPlanet 2</b>                                                                                    | <b>201</b> | <b>96%</b> |
| An amazing game and something to get involved with even if you can't create your own stuff.                 |            |            |
| <b>Lord Of The Rings: Aragorn's Quest</b>                                                                   | <b>199</b> | <b>60%</b> |
| Lost Planet 2                                                                                               | 192        | 75%        |
| <b>Lost Planet: Extreme Condition</b>                                                                       | <b>163</b> | <b>69%</b> |
| Lost: The Video Game                                                                                        | 164        | 38%        |
| <b>LOTR: Conquest</b>                                                                                       | <b>175</b> | <b>52%</b> |
| Madden NFL 07                                                                                               | 151        | 82%        |
| <b>Madden NFL 08</b>                                                                                        | <b>157</b> | <b>82%</b> |
| Madden NFL 09                                                                                               | 170        | 83%        |
| <b>Madden NFL 10</b>                                                                                        | <b>184</b> | <b>82%</b> |
| Madden NFL 11                                                                                               | 196        | 84%        |
| <b>Madden NFL 12</b>                                                                                        | <b>209</b> | <b>85%</b> |
| Mafia II                                                                                                    | 196        | 81%        |

| game                                                                                                                                       | issue      | score      |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| <b>MAG</b>                                                                                                                                 | <b>189</b> | <b>68%</b> |
| Majin And The Forsaken Kingdom                                                                                                             | 199        | 72%        |
| <b>Marvel Vs Capcom 3</b>                                                                                                                  | <b>202</b> | <b>88%</b> |
| Marvel Ultimate Alliance                                                                                                                   | 151        | 64%        |
| <b>Marvel Ultimate Alliance 2</b>                                                                                                          | <b>185</b> | <b>57%</b> |
| <b>Mass Effect 2</b>                                                                                                                       | <b>201</b> | <b>97%</b> |
| Why the hell are you reading this when you should be playing Mass Effect 2 instead? GO GO GO.                                              |            |            |
| Medal Of Honor                                                                                                                             | 198        | 86%        |
| <b>Medal Of Honor Airborne</b>                                                                                                             | <b>161</b> | <b>85%</b> |
| Medieval Moves                                                                                                                             | 213        | 47%        |
| <b>Mercenaries 2: World In Flames</b>                                                                                                      | <b>171</b> | <b>78%</b> |
| <b>Metal Gear Solid 4</b>                                                                                                                  | <b>167</b> | <b>92%</b> |
| Not the final Metal Gear Solid game after all then. Still brilliant though, and still largely incomprehensible.                            |            |            |
| Mobile Suit Gundam: Crossfire                                                                                                              | 151        | 37%        |
| <b>Michael Jackson: The Experience</b>                                                                                                     | <b>205</b> | <b>58%</b> |
| Midnight Club: Los Angeles                                                                                                                 | 173        | 84%        |
| <b>Mindjack</b>                                                                                                                            | <b>202</b> | <b>38%</b> |
| Mini Ninjas                                                                                                                                | 184        | 80%        |
| <b>Mirror's Edge</b>                                                                                                                       | <b>173</b> | <b>71%</b> |
| <b>ModNation Racers</b>                                                                                                                    | <b>192</b> | <b>90%</b> |
| The best kart racer by far on the PlayStation 3, but combined with incredible levels of creativity. If you love LBP you'll love this, too. |            |            |
| Monster Madness                                                                                                                            | 170        | 78%        |
| <b>Mortal Kombat</b>                                                                                                                       | <b>205</b> | <b>81%</b> |
| Mortal Kombat vs DC Universe                                                                                                               | 173        | 68%        |
| <b>MotoGP 08</b>                                                                                                                           | <b>172</b> | <b>65%</b> |
| MotoGP 09/10                                                                                                                               | 190        | 77%        |
| <b>Moto GP 10/11</b>                                                                                                                       | <b>204</b> | <b>64%</b> |
| <b>MotorStorm</b>                                                                                                                          | <b>151</b> | <b>92%</b> |
| MotorStorm: Apocalypse                                                                                                                     | 203        | 76%        |
| <b>MotorStorm: Pacific Rift</b>                                                                                                            | <b>172</b> | <b>93%</b> |
| MX Vs ATV: Alive                                                                                                                           | 206        | 42%        |
| <b>MX Vs ATV Reflex</b>                                                                                                                    | <b>189</b> | <b>68%</b> |
| MX Vs ATV Untamed                                                                                                                          | 164        | 58%        |
| <b>naï'd</b>                                                                                                                               | <b>201</b> | <b>61%</b> |
| Naruto: Ultimate Ninja Storm                                                                                                               | 174        | 59%        |
| <b>NASCAR 08</b>                                                                                                                           | <b>157</b> | <b>38%</b> |
| Naughty Bear                                                                                                                               | 195        | 64%        |
| <b>NBA 07</b>                                                                                                                              | <b>153</b> | <b>33%</b> |
| NBA 2K7                                                                                                                                    | 151        | 76%        |
| <b>NBA 2K8</b>                                                                                                                             | <b>172</b> | <b>71%</b> |
| NBA 2K10                                                                                                                                   | 186        | 79%        |
| <b>NBA 2K11</b>                                                                                                                            | <b>199</b> | <b>82%</b> |
| NBA 2K12                                                                                                                                   | 211        | 88%        |
| <b>NBA Jam</b>                                                                                                                             | <b>200</b> | <b>68%</b> |
| NBA Live 08                                                                                                                                | 158        | 59%        |
| <b>NBA Live 09</b>                                                                                                                         | <b>170</b> | <b>81%</b> |
| NBA Street: Homecourt                                                                                                                      | 151        | 68%        |
| <b>Need For Speed Carbon</b>                                                                                                               | <b>151</b> | <b>76%</b> |
| <b>Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit</b>                                                                                                         | <b>199</b> | <b>91%</b> |
| Hot Pursuit is one of the best arcade racers of all time - pure, unadulterated bliss in game form.                                         |            |            |
| <b>Need For Speed ProStreet</b>                                                                                                            | <b>161</b> | <b>86%</b> |
| Need For Speed Shift                                                                                                                       | 184        | 81%        |
| <b>Need For Speed: The Run</b>                                                                                                             | <b>213</b> | <b>63%</b> |
| Need For Speed Undercover                                                                                                                  | 173        | 75%        |
| <b>Nier</b>                                                                                                                                | <b>192</b> | <b>54%</b> |
| NHL 2K7                                                                                                                                    | 151        | 80%        |
| <b>NHL 2K9</b>                                                                                                                             | <b>172</b> | <b>67%</b> |
| NHL 2K10                                                                                                                                   | 186        | 70%        |
| <b>NHL 09</b>                                                                                                                              | <b>170</b> | <b>88%</b> |
| NHL 10                                                                                                                                     | 184        | 85%        |
| <b>NHL 11</b>                                                                                                                              | <b>198</b> | <b>89%</b> |
| NHL 12                                                                                                                                     | 210        | 78%        |
| <b>Ninja Gaiden Sigma</b>                                                                                                                  | <b>154</b> | <b>88%</b> |
| Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2                                                                                                                       | 184        | 82%        |
| <b>No More Heroes: Heroes' Paradise</b>                                                                                                    | <b>206</b> | <b>89%</b> |
| Operation Flashpoint: Dragon Rising                                                                                                        | 185        | 78%        |
| <b>Operation Flashpoint: Red River</b>                                                                                                     | <b>205</b> | <b>75%</b> |

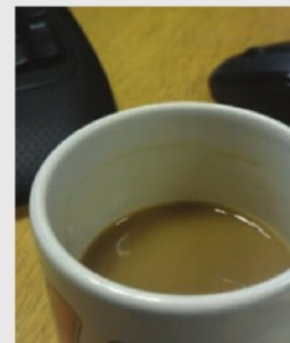
| game                                                                                                                                 | issue      | score      |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| Overlord: Raising Hell                                                                                                               | 167        | 65%        |
| <b>Overlord II</b>                                                                                                                   | <b>181</b> | <b>68%</b> |
| Pain                                                                                                                                 | 183        | 69%        |
| <b>PES 2008</b>                                                                                                                      | <b>159</b> | <b>70%</b> |
| PES 2009                                                                                                                             | 172        | 80%        |
| <b>PES 2010</b>                                                                                                                      | <b>185</b> | <b>72%</b> |
| PES 2011                                                                                                                             | 197        | 73%        |
| <b>PES 2012</b>                                                                                                                      | <b>210</b> | <b>74%</b> |
| Phineas & Ferb: Across The 2nd Dimension                                                                                             | 211        | 66%        |
| <b>PixelJunk Racers</b>                                                                                                              | <b>160</b> | <b>74%</b> |
| PlayStation Move Heroes                                                                                                              | 204        | 54%        |
| <b>POTC: At World's End</b>                                                                                                          | <b>154</b> | <b>48%</b> |
| <b>Portal 2</b>                                                                                                                      | <b>205</b> | <b>95%</b> |
| Another exceptional realisation from Valve, gamers are going to be talking about Portal 2 for a long time to come.                   |            |            |
| <b>Prince Of Persia</b>                                                                                                              | <b>174</b> | <b>83%</b> |
| Prince Of Persia: The Forgotten Sands                                                                                                | 193        | 68%        |
| <b>Prince Of Persia Trilogy</b>                                                                                                      | <b>200</b> | <b>88%</b> |
| Prison Break: The Conspiracy                                                                                                         | 191        | 40%        |
| <b>Prototype</b>                                                                                                                     | <b>181</b> | <b>76%</b> |
| Pure                                                                                                                                 | 171        | 80%        |
| <b>Pure Football</b>                                                                                                                 | <b>194</b> | <b>69%</b> |
| Quantum Of Solace                                                                                                                    | 175        | 57%        |
| <b>Quantum Theory</b>                                                                                                                | <b>197</b> | <b>29%</b> |
| Race Driver: GRID                                                                                                                    | 167        | 85%        |
| <b>Racket Sports</b>                                                                                                                 | <b>198</b> | <b>37%</b> |
| Rage                                                                                                                                 | 211        | 60%        |
| <b>Rainbow Six Vegas</b>                                                                                                             | <b>155</b> | <b>88%</b> |
| Rainbow Six Vegas 2                                                                                                                  | 164        | 78%        |
| <b>Rango</b>                                                                                                                         | <b>203</b> | <b>54%</b> |
| Ratchet & Clank: A Crack In Time                                                                                                     | 186        | 82%        |
| <b>Ratchet &amp; Clank: All 4 One</b>                                                                                                | <b>211</b> | <b>68%</b> |
| Ratchet & Clank: Tools Of Destruction                                                                                                | 160        | 72%        |
| <b>Rayman Origins</b>                                                                                                                | <b>212</b> | <b>80%</b> |
| <b>Red Dead Redemption</b>                                                                                                           | <b>193</b> | <b>92%</b> |
| Relocates the familiar GTA formula to a superbly realised new setting and, in many ways, is unlike anything else as a result.        |            |            |
| Red Dead Redemption: Undead Nightmare                                                                                                | 199        | 87%        |
| <b>Red Faction: Armageddon</b>                                                                                                       | <b>207</b> | <b>62%</b> |
| Red Faction: Guerrilla                                                                                                               | 180        | 80%        |
| <b>Resident Evil 5</b>                                                                                                               | <b>177</b> | <b>86%</b> |
| Resident Evil 5: Gold Edition                                                                                                        | 190        | 86%        |
| <b>Resistance: Fall Of Man</b>                                                                                                       | <b>151</b> | <b>83%</b> |
| <b>Resistance 2</b>                                                                                                                  | <b>173</b> | <b>90%</b> |
| With its impressive set pieces and glorious multiplayer mode, Resistance 2 is one of the best FPSs on the PS3.                       |            |            |
| <b>Resistance 3</b>                                                                                                                  | <b>210</b> | <b>88%</b> |
| Resonance Of Fate                                                                                                                    | 191        | 79%        |
| <b>Ridge Racer 7</b>                                                                                                                 | <b>151</b> | <b>75%</b> |
| Rise Of The Argonauts                                                                                                                | 176        | 58%        |
| <b>Rock Band</b>                                                                                                                     | <b>169</b> | <b>94%</b> |
| <b>Rock Band 2</b>                                                                                                                   | <b>179</b> | <b>96%</b> |
| With the incredible tracklist, tweaked engine, and new modes, this is easily the best rhythm-action game currently available.        |            |            |
| Rock Band 3                                                                                                                          | 199        | 84%        |
| <b>Rogue Warrior</b>                                                                                                                 | <b>188</b> | <b>09%</b> |
| Rugby World Cup 2011                                                                                                                 | 209        | 49%        |
| <b>R.U.S.E.</b>                                                                                                                      | <b>197</b> | <b>82%</b> |
| Sacred 2: Fallen Angel                                                                                                               | 180        | 76%        |
| <b>Saints Row 2</b>                                                                                                                  | <b>172</b> | <b>79%</b> |
| Saints Row: The Third                                                                                                                | 211        | 88%        |
| <b>Saw</b>                                                                                                                           | <b>186</b> | <b>52%</b> |
| Saw II: Flesh & Blood                                                                                                                | 198        | 36%        |
| <b>Sega Mega Drive Ultimate Collection</b>                                                                                           | <b>177</b> | <b>85%</b> |
| SBK 08                                                                                                                               | 172        | 55%        |
| <b>SBK 2011</b>                                                                                                                      | <b>206</b> | <b>70%</b> |
| SBK X: Superbike World Championship                                                                                                  | 193        | 67%        |
| <b>Sega Rally</b>                                                                                                                    | <b>158</b> | <b>92%</b> |
| Simply the best rally game on the PS3. Unless simulation is your bag then you'll want to go for Colin McRae. Not much in it, really. |            |            |
| <b>Sengoku Basara: Samurai Heroes</b>                                                                                                | <b>198</b> | <b>76%</b> |

\*denotes import review

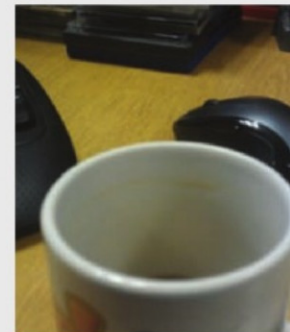
# PLAY'S DIARY



**DAY 2** End of year breaks and time away from work leads to a greater need for caffeine-based stimulation. This has little effect on the finely honed talents of the Play team, however, which is more than used to working under extreme pressure.



**DAY 12** They say caffeine keeps you awake but that's clearly nonsense because if it kept you awake that would assume you actually sleep at any point and we don't really bother sleeping any more we just all stay awake together working.



**DAY 22** Headaches hurt they hurt ow someone said something funny to us so we told them not to say things HAHA ohhh we need more coffee coffee coffee it's delicious and life-giving and no we don't know what addiction means shut up SHUT UP.



**DAY 29** Deadline passed. Coffee intake dropped. New year calling. Done with magazzzzzz...



## LEST WE FORGET... PANDEMIC STUDIOS 1998-2009



It's difficult to know just where to begin with a touching eulogy – usually by telling you all it's 'touching' so you're willing to believe we're being nice. We are, because we have (some) warm memories of ex-studio Pandemic.



It made one of the few decent *Army Men* games, the good muck-about times that came with *Destroy All Humans!* and the surprisingly un-jingoistic *Full Spectrum Warrior*. It all looked rosy, for a time. As usual, though, everything went wrong.



Whatever happened in 2007 – the year that saw no Pandemic releases – must have been something bad. Maybe everybody left the company, or had food poisoning (for a year), or something. Because when 2008 rolled around it had all gone wrong.



*Mercenaries 2* was alright, but buggy as hell and functionally was worse than its forebear. *The Saboteur* was the kind of game you would expect to be released by a studio at death's door. It was the studio's last release.



We were sad to see Pandemic go, even if it did produce the execrable *The Lord of the Rings: Conquest*. *Mercenaries* and *Star Wars: Battlefront II* were classics of the PS2 shooter genre. It all just went a bit tits up, really.

| game                                                                                                                                                       | issue      | score      |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| Shadows Of The Damned                                                                                                                                      | 207        | 79%        |
| <b>Shaun White Skateboarding</b>                                                                                                                           | <b>198</b> | <b>70%</b> |
| Shaun White Snowboarding                                                                                                                                   | 173        | 72%        |
| <b>Shellshock 2: Blood Trails</b>                                                                                                                          | <b>177</b> | <b>32%</b> |
| Shift 2: Unleashed                                                                                                                                         | 204        | 66%        |
| <b>Silent Hill: Homecoming</b>                                                                                                                             | <b>174</b> | <b>64%</b> |
| Simpsons Game                                                                                                                                              | 160        | 82%        |
| <b>SingStar</b>                                                                                                                                            | <b>159</b> | <b>80%</b> |
| SingStar Guitar                                                                                                                                            | 199        | 70%        |
| <b>SingStar Pop Edition</b>                                                                                                                                | <b>179</b> | <b>81%</b> |
| Singularity                                                                                                                                                | 195        | 80%        |
| <b>Skate</b>                                                                                                                                               | <b>159</b> | <b>86%</b> |
| Skate 2                                                                                                                                                    | 175        | 82%        |
| <b>Skate 3</b>                                                                                                                                             | <b>192</b> | <b>86%</b> |
| Sniper: Ghost Warrior                                                                                                                                      | 206        | 45%        |
| <b>SOCOM: Special Forces</b>                                                                                                                               | <b>205</b> | <b>63%</b> |
| Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing                                                                                                                              | 190        | 78%        |
| <b>Sonic Generations</b>                                                                                                                                   | <b>212</b> | <b>70%</b> |
| Sonic The Hedgehog                                                                                                                                         | 151        | 52%        |
| <b>Sonic Unleashed</b>                                                                                                                                     | <b>175</b> | <b>48%</b> |
| <b>Soul Calibur IV</b>                                                                                                                                     | <b>169</b> | <b>94%</b> |
| Spider-Man 3                                                                                                                                               | 155        | 33%        |
| <b>Spider-Man: Edge Of Time</b>                                                                                                                            | <b>212</b> | <b>38%</b> |
| Spider-Man: Shattered Dimensions                                                                                                                           | 197        | 69%        |
| <b>Spider-Man: Web Of Shadows</b>                                                                                                                          | <b>173</b> | <b>55%</b> |
| Splatterhouse                                                                                                                                              | 200        | 58%        |
| <b>Splinter Cell Double Agent</b>                                                                                                                          | <b>153</b> | <b>79%</b> |
| <b>Split/Second: Velocity</b>                                                                                                                              | <b>192</b> | <b>90%</b> |
| Just beating <i>Blur</i> to the chequered flag, <i>Split/Second</i> is a wonderfully intense racing game in the <i>Burnout</i> mould.                      |            |            |
| <b>Sports Champions</b>                                                                                                                                    | <b>196</b> | <b>83%</b> |
| Star Ocean: The Last Hope International                                                                                                                    | 190        | 63%        |
| <b>Star Wars: The Force Unleashed</b>                                                                                                                      | <b>171</b> | <b>65%</b> |
| Star Wars: The Force Unleashed II                                                                                                                          | 199        | 61%        |
| <b>Start The Party!</b>                                                                                                                                    | <b>196</b> | <b>72%</b> |
| Stormrise                                                                                                                                                  | 178        | 51%        |
| <b>Stranglehold</b>                                                                                                                                        | <b>159</b> | <b>65%</b> |
| <b>Street Fighter IV</b>                                                                                                                                   | <b>176</b> | <b>95%</b> |
| Super Street Fighter IV: Arcade Edition                                                                                                                    | 207        | 88%        |
| <b>Stuntman: Ignition</b>                                                                                                                                  | <b>157</b> | <b>82%</b> |
| SuperCar Challenge                                                                                                                                         | 183        | 66%        |
| <b>Superstars V8: Next Challenge</b>                                                                                                                       | <b>190</b> | <b>55%</b> |
| Superstars V8 Racing                                                                                                                                       | 181        | 63%        |
| <b>Super Street Fighter IV</b>                                                                                                                             | <b>191</b> | <b>90%</b> |
| The fact that you're buying a lot of stuff you've probably bought already is the only drawback to what is the best fighter ever made.                      |            |            |
| Supremacy MMA                                                                                                                                              | 211        | 40%        |
| <b>Tekken 6</b>                                                                                                                                            | <b>184</b> | <b>94%</b> |
| There are flaws that hurt the experience, but nothing, <i>nothing</i> , stops <i>Tekken 6</i> from being an intense, tactical and brilliant fighting game. |            |            |
| <b>Tekken Hybrid</b>                                                                                                                                       | <b>213</b> | <b>79%</b> |
| Test Drive Unlimited 2                                                                                                                                     | 203        | 62%        |
| <b>The Adventures Of Tintin</b>                                                                                                                            | <b>212</b> | <b>58%</b> |
| <b>The Beatles: Rock Band</b>                                                                                                                              | <b>184</b> | <b>96%</b> |
| The Bourne Conspiracy                                                                                                                                      | 168        | 72%        |
| <b>The Club</b>                                                                                                                                            | <b>163</b> | <b>80%</b> |
| The Cursed Crusade                                                                                                                                         | 211        | 40%        |
| <b>The Darkness</b>                                                                                                                                        | <b>154</b> | <b>91%</b> |
| <b>The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion</b>                                                                                                                      | <b>152</b> | <b>91%</b> |
| <b>The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim</b>                                                                                                                         | <b>212</b> | <b>93%</b> |
| WARNING: The latest addition to Bethesda's superb franchise will seriously damage your social life.                                                        |            |            |
| The Fight                                                                                                                                                  | 199        | 42%        |
| <b>The Godfather</b>                                                                                                                                       | <b>151</b> | <b>37%</b> |
| The Godfather II                                                                                                                                           | 178        | 38%        |
| <b>The Golden Compass</b>                                                                                                                                  | <b>162</b> | <b>32%</b> |
| The House Of The Dead: Overkill                                                                                                                            | 212        | 75%        |
| <b>The Incredible Hulk</b>                                                                                                                                 | <b>168</b> | <b>52%</b> |
| The King Of Fighters XII                                                                                                                                   | 182        | 82%        |
| <b>The King Of Fighters XIII</b>                                                                                                                           | <b>213</b> | <b>76%</b> |
| The Lord Of The Rings: War In The North                                                                                                                    | 213        | 42%        |
| <b>The Orange Box</b>                                                                                                                                      | <b>161</b> | <b>93%</b> |
| <b>The Saboteur</b>                                                                                                                                        | <b>187</b> | <b>67%</b> |
| The Shoot                                                                                                                                                  | 199        | 76%        |
| <b>The Sims 3</b>                                                                                                                                          | <b>199</b> | <b>87%</b> |
| The Sims 3: Pets                                                                                                                                           | 212        | 70%        |
| <b>The Sly Collection</b>                                                                                                                                  | <b>200</b> | <b>84%</b> |
| Thor: God Of Thunder                                                                                                                                       | 206        | 38%        |
| <b>Tiger Woods PGA Tour 07</b>                                                                                                                             | <b>151</b> | <b>88%</b> |
| Tiger Woods PGA Tour 08                                                                                                                                    | 158        | 73%        |

| game                                                                                                                              | issue      | score      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| <b>Tiger Woods PGA Tour 09</b>                                                                                                    | <b>171</b> | <b>86%</b> |
| Tiger Woods PGA Tour 10                                                                                                           | 181        | 69%        |
| <b>Tiger Woods PGA Tour 11</b>                                                                                                    | <b>194</b> | <b>60%</b> |
| Tiger Woods PGA 12: The Masters                                                                                                   | 204        | 65%        |
| <b>Time Crisis 4</b>                                                                                                              | <b>166</b> | <b>69%</b> |
| Time Crisis: Razing Storm                                                                                                         | 199        | 58%        |
| <b>TimeShift</b>                                                                                                                  | <b>162</b> | <b>72%</b> |
| TNA Impact!                                                                                                                       | 171        | 71%        |
| <b>Tom Clancy's EndWar</b>                                                                                                        | <b>173</b> | <b>80%</b> |
| Tom Clancy's H.A.W.X.                                                                                                             | 177        | 75%        |
| <b>Tom Clancy's H.A.W.X. 2</b>                                                                                                    | <b>196</b> | <b>69%</b> |
| Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Classics Trilogy HD                                                                                    | 210        | 78%        |
| <b>Tomb Raider Trilogy</b>                                                                                                        | <b>204</b> | <b>86%</b> |
| Tomb Raider: Underworld                                                                                                           | 173        | 83%        |
| <b>Tony Hawk's Project 8</b>                                                                                                      | <b>151</b> | <b>85%</b> |
| Tony Hawk's Proving Ground                                                                                                        | 160        | 72%        |
| <b>Tony Hawk: Ride</b>                                                                                                            | <b>188</b> | <b>52%</b> |
| Top Spin 3                                                                                                                        | 168        | 71%        |
| <b>Top Spin 4</b>                                                                                                                 | <b>203</b> | <b>60%</b> |
| Tornado Outbreak                                                                                                                  | 186        | 56%        |
| <b>Toy Story 3</b>                                                                                                                | <b>195</b> | <b>82%</b> |
| Transformers: Dark Of The Moon                                                                                                    | 208        | 64%        |
| <b>Transformers: Revenge Of The Fallen</b>                                                                                        | <b>182</b> | <b>41%</b> |
| Transformers: The Game                                                                                                            | 156        | 34%        |
| <b>Transformers: War For Cybertron</b>                                                                                            | <b>194</b> | <b>80%</b> |
| Trinity: Souls Of Zill O'll                                                                                                       | 202        | 56%        |
| <b>Trinity Universe</b>                                                                                                           | <b>194</b> | <b>61%</b> |
| Tron Evolution                                                                                                                    | 200        | 17%        |
| <b>Turning Point: Fall Of Liberty</b>                                                                                             | <b>165</b> | <b>40%</b> |
| Turok                                                                                                                             | 163        | 46%        |
| <b>TV Superstars</b>                                                                                                              | <b>199</b> | <b>53%</b> |
| Two Worlds II                                                                                                                     | 203        | 64%        |
| <b>UEFA EURO 2008</b>                                                                                                             | <b>165</b> | <b>62%</b> |
| <b>UFC Undisputed 2009</b>                                                                                                        | <b>180</b> | <b>90%</b> |
| <i>Undisputed</i> is gorgeous to look at, it's incredibly deep, and it's one of the most addictive fighters we've played in ages. |            |            |
| <b>UFC Undisputed 2010</b>                                                                                                        | <b>193</b> | <b>88%</b> |
| Ultimate Marvel Vs Capcom 3                                                                                                       | 212        | 78%        |
| <b>Uncharted: Drake's Fortune</b>                                                                                                 | <b>161</b> | <b>87%</b> |
| <b>Uncharted 2: Among Thieves</b>                                                                                                 | <b>185</b> | <b>96%</b> |
| <b>Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception</b>                                                                                             | <b>212</b> | <b>90%</b> |
| Fans of the series won't be disappointed as Drake returns with some exceptional set pieces and superb action.                     |            |            |
| <b>Unreal Tournament III</b>                                                                                                      | <b>162</b> | <b>88%</b> |
| Untold Legends: Dark Kingdom                                                                                                      | 151        | 54%        |
| <b>Valkyria Chronicles</b>                                                                                                        | <b>173</b> | <b>82%</b> |
| Vancouver 2010                                                                                                                    | 189        | 76%        |
| <b>Vanquish</b>                                                                                                                   | <b>197</b> | <b>93%</b> |
| A brilliant surprise from the developer of <i>Bayonetta</i> and easily one of the best games we've played in 2010.                |            |            |
| <b>Viking: Battle For Asgard</b>                                                                                                  | <b>165</b> | <b>74%</b> |
| Virtua Fighter 5                                                                                                                  | 151        | 83%        |
| <b>Virtua Tennis 2009</b>                                                                                                         | <b>180</b> | <b>80%</b> |
| <b>Virtua Tennis 3</b>                                                                                                            | <b>150</b> | <b>91%</b> |
| Virtua Tennis 4                                                                                                                   | 205        | 79%        |
| Wanted: Weapons Of Fate                                                                                                           | 179        | 63%        |
| <b>Warhammer 40,000: Space Marine</b>                                                                                             | <b>210</b> | <b>51%</b> |
| Warhawk                                                                                                                           | 157        | 84%        |
| <b>Warriors: Legends Of Troy</b>                                                                                                  | <b>202</b> | <b>14%</b> |
| Watchmen: The End Is Nigh                                                                                                         | 183        | 55%        |
| <b>Way Of The Samurai 3</b>                                                                                                       | <b>190</b> | <b>16%</b> |
| Wet                                                                                                                               | 184        | 41%        |
| <b>Wheelman</b>                                                                                                                   | <b>178</b> | <b>72%</b> |
| Where The Wild Things Are                                                                                                         | 188        | 56%        |
| <b>White Knight Chronicles</b>                                                                                                    | <b>190</b> | <b>55%</b> |
| White Knight Chronicles II                                                                                                        | 207        | 49%        |
| <b>Wolfenstein</b>                                                                                                                | <b>183</b> | <b>72%</b> |
| World Snooker Championship 2007                                                                                                   | 151        | 56%        |
| <b>WRC: FIA World Rally Championship</b>                                                                                          | <b>197</b> | <b>76%</b> |
| WRC 2: FIA World Rally Championship                                                                                               | 211        | 63%        |
| <b>WSC REAL 09: World Snooker Championship</b>                                                                                    | <b>177</b> | <b>67%</b> |
| WSC Real II                                                                                                                       | 204        | 69%        |
| <b>WWE All Stars</b>                                                                                                              | <b>204</b> | <b>82%</b> |
| WWE Legends Of Wrestlemania                                                                                                       | 178        | 80%        |
| <b>WWE SmackDown Vs Raw 2008</b>                                                                                                  | <b>159</b> | <b>88%</b> |
| WWE SmackDown Vs Raw 2009                                                                                                         | 173        | 74%        |
| <b>WWE SmackDown Vs Raw 2010</b>                                                                                                  | <b>185</b> | <b>77%</b> |
| WWE SmackDown Vs Raw 2011                                                                                                         | 199        | 63%        |
| <b>WWE '12</b>                                                                                                                    | <b>212</b> | <b>50%</b> |
| X-Blades                                                                                                                          | 178        | 54%        |
| <b>X-Men Destiny</b>                                                                                                              | <b>211</b> | <b>35%</b> |
| X-Men Origins: Wolverine                                                                                                          | 179        | 71%        |
| <b>Yakuza 3</b>                                                                                                                   | <b>191</b> | <b>80%</b> |
| Yakuza 4                                                                                                                          | 203        | 79%        |

| game                                                                                                                  | issue      | score      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| <b>Yoostar 2: In The Movies</b>                                                                                       | <b>204</b> | <b>60%</b> |
| <b>PS STORE LISTING</b>                                                                                               |            |            |
| Classic, frantic and utterly brilliant arcade action from Sega. A fine example of what the company is best known for. |            |            |
| <b>1942: Joint Strike</b>                                                                                             | <b>170</b> | <b>74%</b> |
| 3-On-3 NHL Arcade                                                                                                     | 177        | 62%        |
| <b>After Burner Climax</b>                                                                                            | <b>193</b> | <b>91%</b> |
| <b>Age Of Booty</b>                                                                                                   | <b>172</b> | <b>81%</b> |
| Alien Breed: Impact                                                                                                   | 196        | 80%        |
| <b>Alien Breed 2: Assault</b>                                                                                         | <b>201</b> | <b>82%</b> |
| Alien Breed 3: Descent                                                                                                | 204        | 61%        |
| <b>Anarchy: Rush Hour</b>                                                                                             | <b>194</b> | <b>73%</b> |
| Aqua Panic                                                                                                            | 193        | 68%        |
| <b>Armageddon Riders</b>                                                                                              | <b>207</b> | <b>65%</b> |
| Back To The Future: It's About Time                                                                                   | 204        | 71%        |
| <b>Battlefield 1943</b>                                                                                               | <b>182</b> | <b>89%</b> |
| Beat Hazard Ultra                                                                                                     | 213        | 79%        |
| <b>Beat Sketcher</b>                                                                                                  | <b>201</b> | <b>85%</b> |
| Beyond Good & Evil HD                                                                                                 | 207        | 86%        |
| <b>Bishi Bashi Special!</b>                                                                                           | <b>175</b> | <b>61%</b> |
| Bionic Commando Rearmed                                                                                               | 169        | 88%        |
| <b>Bionic Commando Rearmed 2</b>                                                                                      | <b>203</b> | <b>61%</b> |
| Blacklight: Tango Down                                                                                                | 200        | 64%        |
| <b>Blade Kitten</b>                                                                                                   | <b>197</b> | <b>72%</b> |
| Blast Factor                                                                                                          | 152        | 72%        |
| <b>Blokus</b>                                                                                                         | <b>202</b> | <b>54%</b> |
| BloodRayne: Betrayal                                                                                                  | 211        | 62%        |
| <b>Blue Toad Murder Files: The Mysteries Of Little Riddle Episode I</b>                                               | <b>188</b> | <b>65%</b> |
| Blue Toad Murder Files: The Mysteries Of Little Riddle Episode II                                                     | 188        | 61%        |
| <b>Blue Toad Murder Files Episodes 4/5/6</b>                                                                          | <b>193</b> | <b>70%</b> |
| Bomberman Ultra                                                                                                       | 185        | 82%        |
| <b>Braid</b>                                                                                                          | <b>188</b> | <b>93%</b> |
| We had to wait quite a while, but time is what we have plenty of both with and for <i>Braid</i> . Simply brilliant.   |            |            |
| <b>Burn Zombie Burn</b>                                                                                               | <b>178</b> | <b>85%</b> |
| Burnout Crash                                                                                                         | 211        | 79%        |
| <b>Call Of Duty Classic</b>                                                                                           | <b>188</b> | <b>90%</b> |
| It doesn't have <i>MW2</i> 's polish but it's a great game both as a slice of history and in its own right.           |            |            |
| Calling All Cars                                                                                                      | 155        | 81%        |
| <b>Castle Crashers</b>                                                                                                | <b>200</b> | <b>88%</b> |
| Castlevania: Harmony Of Despair                                                                                       | 212        | 67%        |
| <b>Catan</b>                                                                                                          | <b>195</b> | <b>85%</b> |
| Chime Super Deluxe                                                                                                    | 203        | 80%        |
| <b>Comet Crash</b>                                                                                                    | <b>186</b> | <b>84%</b> |
| Comix Zone                                                                                                            | 210        | 62%        |
| <b>Command &amp; Conquer: Red Alert</b>                                                                               | <b>168</b> | <b>70%</b> |
| Command & Conquer Red Alert: Retaliation                                                                              | 176        | 55%        |
| <b>Command &amp; Conquer Red Alert 3 Commander's Challenge</b>                                                        | <b>185</b> | <b>68%</b> |
| Command & Conquer                                                                                                     | 175        | 44%        |
| <b>Cool Boarders</b>                                                                                                  | <b>173</b> | <b>57%</b> |
| Cool Boarders 2                                                                                                       | 175        | 31%        |
| <b>Costume Quest</b>                                                                                                  | <b>199</b> | <b>70%</b> |
| Crash Bandicoot                                                                                                       | 172        | 77%        |
| <b>Crash Bandicoot 3: Warped</b>                                                                                      | <b>174</b> | <b>82%</b> |
| Crash Commando                                                                                                        | 174        | 80%        |
| <b>Crash Team Racing</b>                                                                                              | <b>170</b> | <b>79%</b> |
| Crazy Machines Elements                                                                                               | 210        | 71%        |
| <b>Crazy Taxi</b>                                                                                                     | <b>200</b> | <b>80%</b> |
| Crescent Pale Mist                                                                                                    | 200        | 70%        |
| <b>Critter Crunch</b>                                                                                                 | <b>188</b> | <b>91%</b> |
| This is yet another beautiful, cute and high-class puzzler on the PSN that works perfectly and is a joy to play.      |            |            |
| <b>Crystal Defenders</b>                                                                                              | <b>184</b> | <b>48%</b> |
| Cubix HD                                                                                                              | 207        | 76%        |
| <b>Dark Mist</b>                                                                                                      | <b>164</b> | <b>53%</b> |
| Dead Nation                                                                                                           | 201        | 86%        |
| <b>Dead Space: Extraction</b>                                                                                         | <b>203</b> | <b>88%</b> |
| Dead Space: Ignition                                                                                                  | 199        | 47%        |
| <b>DeathSpank</b>                                                                                                     | <b>195</b> | <b>83%</b> |
| Destruction Derby                                                                                                     | 01         | 80%        |
| <b>.detuned</b>                                                                                                       | <b>186</b> | <b>50%</b> |
| Digger HD                                                                                                             | 186        | 52%        |
| <b>Diner Dash</b>                                                                                                     | <b>190</b> | <b>66%</b> |
| <b>Driver</b>                                                                                                         | <b>171</b> | <b>90%</b> |

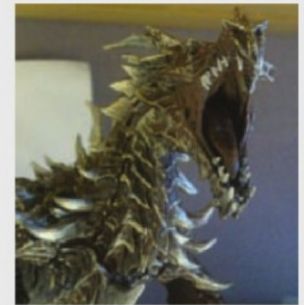


| game                                                                                | issue                                                                                                                                            | score      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Droplitz</b>                                                                     | <b>184</b>                                                                                                                                       | <b>91%</b> |
| <b>Earthworm Jim HD</b>                                                             | <b>196</b>                                                                                                                                       | <b>89%</b> |
| Eat Them!                                                                           | 202                                                                                                                                              | 60%        |
| <b>echochrome II</b>                                                                | <b>202</b>                                                                                                                                       | <b>83%</b> |
| echochrome                                                                          | 169                                                                                                                                              | 85%        |
| <b>Elefunk</b>                                                                      | <b>170</b>                                                                                                                                       | <b>45%</b> |
| Euforia                                                                             | 212                                                                                                                                              | 85%        |
| <b>Explodemon</b>                                                                   | <b>203</b>                                                                                                                                       | <b>70%</b> |
| Fat Princess                                                                        | 183                                                                                                                                              | 65%        |
| <b>Fatal Inertia EX</b>                                                             | <b>168</b>                                                                                                                                       | <b>65%</b> |
| FIFA 09 Ultimate Team                                                               | 178                                                                                                                                              | 61%        |
| <b>Final Fight: Double Impact</b>                                                   | <b>193</b>                                                                                                                                       | <b>90%</b> |
|    | This scrolling-fighter classic from 1989 makes an almost faultless appearance on PSN. Stick it on your download list.                            |            |
| <b>Final Fantasy VII</b>                                                            | <b>181</b>                                                                                                                                       | <b>96%</b> |
|    | Even after all these years it still holds up. In fact, our mark seems to have gone up 3% since 1997.                                             |            |
| <b>Final Fantasy VIII</b>                                                           | <b>190</b>                                                                                                                                       | <b>90%</b> |
| <b>Final Fantasy IX</b>                                                             | <b>195</b>                                                                                                                                       | <b>90%</b> |
| Flight Control HD                                                                   | 198                                                                                                                                              | 85%        |
| <b>Flock!</b>                                                                       | <b>179</b>                                                                                                                                       | <b>70%</b> |
| <b>fIOW</b>                                                                         | <b>151</b>                                                                                                                                       | <b>90%</b> |
|    | Another 90% game for the PS3, another lesson in simple, addictive gameplay. fIOW is an innovative title available on the Network.                |            |
| <b>Flower</b>                                                                       | <b>176</b>                                                                                                                                       | <b>85%</b> |
| Frogger Returns                                                                     | 190                                                                                                                                              | 35%        |
| <b>From Dust</b>                                                                    | <b>211</b>                                                                                                                                       | <b>82%</b> |
| Funky Lab Rat                                                                       | 201                                                                                                                                              | 70%        |
| <b>G-Police</b>                                                                     | <b>27</b>                                                                                                                                        | <b>84%</b> |
| Gatling Gears                                                                       | 207                                                                                                                                              | 62%        |
| <b>Geon</b>                                                                         | <b>175</b>                                                                                                                                       | <b>71%</b> |
| Go! Puzzle                                                                          | 152                                                                                                                                              | 58%        |
| <b>Gran Turismo HD</b>                                                              | <b>150</b>                                                                                                                                       | <b>75%</b> |
| Gravity Crash                                                                       | 187                                                                                                                                              | 85%        |
| <b>Greed Corp</b>                                                                   | <b>191</b>                                                                                                                                       | <b>75%</b> |
| GTI Club+                                                                           | 174                                                                                                                                              | 72%        |
| <b>Gundemonium Collection</b>                                                       | <b>197</b>                                                                                                                                       | <b>80%</b> |
| Gunstar Heroes                                                                      | 181                                                                                                                                              | 85%        |
| <b>Hamsterball</b>                                                                  | <b>194</b>                                                                                                                                       | <b>72%</b> |
| Hardcore 4x4                                                                        | 15                                                                                                                                               | 81%        |
| <b>Hasbro Family Game Night</b>                                                     | <b>187</b>                                                                                                                                       | <b>60%</b> |
| Heavy Weapon                                                                        | 187                                                                                                                                              | 75%        |
| <b>High Velocity Bowling</b>                                                        | <b>163</b>                                                                                                                                       | <b>50%</b> |
| Hi-Octane                                                                           | 178                                                                                                                                              | 64%        |
| <b>Hustle Kings</b>                                                                 | <b>190</b>                                                                                                                                       | <b>87%</b> |
| Hyperballoid HD                                                                     | 188                                                                                                                                              | 70%        |
| <b>inFamous: Festival Of Blood</b>                                                  | <b>212</b>                                                                                                                                       | <b>76%</b> |
| Inferno Pool                                                                        | 181                                                                                                                                              | 81%        |
| <b>International Track &amp; Field</b>                                              | <b>171</b>                                                                                                                                       | <b>80%</b> |
| Interpol: The Trail Of Doctor Chaos                                                 | 185                                                                                                                                              | 48%        |
| <b>Invincible Tiger: The Legend Of Han Tao</b>                                      | <b>185</b>                                                                                                                                       | <b>70%</b> |
| Jet Rider 2                                                                         | 176                                                                                                                                              | 71%        |
| <b>Joe Danger</b>                                                                   | <b>194</b>                                                                                                                                       | <b>96%</b> |
|  | Simply put, <i>Joe Danger</i> is one of the best games you'll currently find on the PSN. Buy it. Buy it now.                                     |            |
| <b>Judge Dredd</b>                                                                  | <b>18</b>                                                                                                                                        | <b>19%</b> |
| Jumping Flash                                                                       | 172                                                                                                                                              | 55%        |
| <b>Kick-Ass The Game</b>                                                            | <b>194</b>                                                                                                                                       | <b>60%</b> |
| Kula World                                                                          | 172                                                                                                                                              | 71%        |
| <b>Kung-Fu Live</b>                                                                 | <b>201</b>                                                                                                                                       | <b>42%</b> |
| Landit Bandit                                                                       | 195                                                                                                                                              | 66%        |
| <b>Lara Croft And The Guardian Of Light</b>                                         | <b>198</b>                                                                                                                                       | <b>90%</b> |
|  | Lara is back to her best in <i>The Guardian Of Light</i> . <i>Tomb Raider</i> fans will love it and for just £9.99 everyone else should, too.    |            |
| Lead & Gold: Gangs Of The Wild West                                                 | 193                                                                                                                                              | 65%        |
| <b>Lemmings</b>                                                                     | <b>151</b>                                                                                                                                       | <b>79%</b> |
| <b>Limbo</b>                                                                        | <b>209</b>                                                                                                                                       | <b>90%</b> |
|  | We had to wait a while, but just like with <i>Braid</i> it in no way negatively impacts the quality of what is just that – a quality experience. |            |
| Linger In Shadows                                                                   | 173                                                                                                                                              | 69%        |
| <b>LocoRoco Cocoreccho!</b>                                                         | <b>159</b>                                                                                                                                       | <b>80%</b> |
| <b>Lumines Supernova</b>                                                            | <b>178</b>                                                                                                                                       | <b>90%</b> |
| Madden NFL Arcade                                                                   | 188                                                                                                                                              | 58%        |
| <b>Magic Carpet</b>                                                                 | <b>179</b>                                                                                                                                       | <b>65%</b> |
| Magic: The Gathering: Duels Of The Planeswalkers                                    | 202                                                                                                                                              | 84%        |
| <b>Magic: The Gathering: Duels Of The Planeswalkers 2012</b>                        | <b>208</b>                                                                                                                                       | <b>70%</b> |
| <b>Marvel Vs Capcom 2</b>                                                           | <b>182</b>                                                                                                                                       | <b>90%</b> |

| game                                                                                | issue                                                                                                                                  | score      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Matt Hazard: Blood Bath And Beyond</b>                                           | <b>189</b>                                                                                                                             | <b>69%</b> |
| Medal Of Honor: Frontline                                                           | 210                                                                                                                                    | 52%        |
| <b>MediEvil</b>                                                                     | <b>173</b>                                                                                                                             | <b>45%</b> |
| Mega Man 9                                                                          | 172                                                                                                                                    | 75%        |
| <b>Mega Man 10</b>                                                                  | <b>192</b>                                                                                                                             | <b>82%</b> |
| <b>Metal Gear Solid</b>                                                             | <b>187</b>                                                                                                                             | <b>93%</b> |
|    | While it looks rather rough now, the game itself remains a real high point in the franchise. Simply essential.                         |            |
| Metal Gear Solid Online                                                             | 175                                                                                                                                    | 45%        |
| <b>Microbot</b>                                                                     | <b>202</b>                                                                                                                             | <b>51%</b> |
| <b>Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge Special Edition</b>                           | <b>195</b>                                                                                                                             | <b>94%</b> |
| Motorhead                                                                           | 173                                                                                                                                    | 60%        |
| <b>Namco Museum Essentials</b>                                                      | <b>193</b>                                                                                                                             | <b>60%</b> |
| Naruto Shippuden: Kizuna Drive                                                      | 205                                                                                                                                    | 42%        |
| <b>NBA Jam: On Fire Edition</b>                                                     | <b>212</b>                                                                                                                             | <b>64%</b> |
| Noby Noby Boy                                                                       | 177                                                                                                                                    | 85%        |
| <b>Nucleus</b>                                                                      | <b>155</b>                                                                                                                             | <b>82%</b> |
| Numbblast                                                                           | 183                                                                                                                                    | 60%        |
| <b>N20</b>                                                                          | <b>37</b>                                                                                                                              | <b>70%</b> |
| Outland                                                                             | 207                                                                                                                                    | 72%        |
| <b>OutRun Online Arcade</b>                                                         | <b>180</b>                                                                                                                             | <b>80%</b> |
| <b>Pac-Man Championship Edition DX</b>                                              | <b>201</b>                                                                                                                             | <b>91%</b> |
|    | Bold, bright, insanely addictive – this re-imagining of the retro classic is an essential addition to anybody's PSN library.           |            |
| <b>Payday: The Heist</b>                                                            | <b>213</b>                                                                                                                             | <b>88%</b> |
| Pain                                                                                | 183                                                                                                                                    | 69%        |
| <b>Peggle</b>                                                                       | <b>189</b>                                                                                                                             | <b>94%</b> |
| <b>PixelJunk Eden</b>                                                               | <b>169</b>                                                                                                                             | <b>67%</b> |
| <b>PixelJunk Monsters</b>                                                           | <b>163</b>                                                                                                                             | <b>94%</b> |
| <b>PixelJunk Shooter</b>                                                            | <b>187</b>                                                                                                                             | <b>93%</b> |
| <b>PixelJunk Shooter 2</b>                                                          | <b>204</b>                                                                                                                             | <b>90%</b> |
|  | If you like challenges, shooting, pixels and junk, then this combines all four of those and adds in several splashes of style as well. |            |
| PixelJunk SideScroller                                                              | 213                                                                                                                                    | 77%        |
| <b>Piyotama</b>                                                                     | <b>162</b>                                                                                                                             | <b>62%</b> |
| Planet Minigolf                                                                     | 196                                                                                                                                    | 58%        |
| <b>Polar Panic</b>                                                                  | <b>190</b>                                                                                                                             | <b>65%</b> |
| Populous: The Beginning                                                             | 46                                                                                                                                     | 70%        |
| <b>Prince Of Persia Classic</b>                                                     | <b>173</b>                                                                                                                             | <b>67%</b> |
| Puzzle Chronicles                                                                   | 194                                                                                                                                    | 70%        |
| <b>Puzzle Dimension</b>                                                             | <b>208</b>                                                                                                                             | <b>81%</b> |
| Puzzle Quest Galactrix                                                              | 181                                                                                                                                    | 68%        |
| <b>Q*bert</b>                                                                       | <b>58</b>                                                                                                                              | <b>53%</b> |
| Rag Doll Kung Fu: Fists Of Plastic                                                  | 179                                                                                                                                    | 83%        |
| <b>Rampage: World Tour</b>                                                          | <b>29</b>                                                                                                                              | <b>77%</b> |
| Ratchet & Clank: Quest For Booty                                                    | 170                                                                                                                                    | 69%        |
| <b>Rayman</b>                                                                       | <b>01</b>                                                                                                                              | <b>76%</b> |
| Renegade Ops                                                                        | 211                                                                                                                                    | 78%        |
| <b>Resident Evil 4 HD</b>                                                           | <b>210</b>                                                                                                                             | <b>93%</b> |
|  | One of the best games ever made comes to PSN. Unfortunately it also brings with it a rather high price tag.                            |            |
| <b>Resident Evil Code Veronica X</b>                                                | <b>211</b>                                                                                                                             | <b>72%</b> |
| Revenge Of The Wounded Dragons                                                      | 191                                                                                                                                    | 60%        |
| <b>Riff: Everyday Shooter</b>                                                       | <b>162</b>                                                                                                                             | <b>86%</b> |
| Risk: Factions                                                                      | 202                                                                                                                                    | 80%        |
| <b>Rocketbirds: Hardboiled Chicken</b>                                              | <b>212</b>                                                                                                                             | <b>82%</b> |
| Rocket Knight                                                                       | 194                                                                                                                                    | 74%        |
| <b>Rocketmen: Axis Of Evil</b>                                                      | <b>165</b>                                                                                                                             | <b>63%</b> |
| <b>Sam &amp; Max: The Devil's Playhouse Episode 1</b>                               | <b>194</b>                                                                                                                             | <b>90%</b> |
| <b>Sam &amp; Max: The Devil's Playhouse Episode 2</b>                               | <b>194</b>                                                                                                                             | <b>92%</b> |
|  | This is even better than the first episode due to the fact it has better puzzles and even funnier dialogue.                            |            |
| <b>Sega Rally Online Arcade</b>                                                     | <b>208</b>                                                                                                                             | <b>74%</b> |
| Savage Moon                                                                         | 175                                                                                                                                    | 87%        |
| <b>Scott Pilgrim Vs The World</b>                                                   | <b>197</b>                                                                                                                             | <b>77%</b> |
| Section 8                                                                           | 193                                                                                                                                    | 78%        |
| <b>Section 8: Prejudice</b>                                                         | <b>209</b>                                                                                                                             | <b>80%</b> |
| Shank                                                                               | 197                                                                                                                                    | 86%        |
| <b>Shatter</b>                                                                      | <b>183</b>                                                                                                                             | <b>91%</b> |
| Sheep                                                                               | 171                                                                                                                                    | 78%        |
| <b>Siren Blood Curse</b>                                                            | <b>170</b>                                                                                                                             | <b>62%</b> |
| Smash Cars                                                                          | 184                                                                                                                                    | 50%        |
| <b>SOCOM Confrontation</b>                                                          | <b>178</b>                                                                                                                             | <b>55%</b> |
| Soldner-X 2: Final Prototype                                                        | 195                                                                                                                                    | 70%        |
| <b>Sonic 4: Episode One</b>                                                         | <b>199</b>                                                                                                                             | <b>82%</b> |
| Sonic Adventure                                                                     | 198                                                                                                                                    | 63%        |
| <b>Spin Jam</b>                                                                     | <b>174</b>                                                                                                                             | <b>32%</b> |

| game                                                                                  | issue                                                                                                                                         | score      |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Syphon Filter</b>                                                                  | <b>48</b>                                                                                                                                     | <b>93%</b> |
| <b>Snakeball</b>                                                                      | <b>176</b>                                                                                                                                    | <b>92%</b> |
| Stacking                                                                              | 203                                                                                                                                           | 88%        |
| <b>Star Trek: D-A-C</b>                                                               | <b>189</b>                                                                                                                                    | <b>57%</b> |
| Street Fighter Alpha: Warrior's Dream                                                 | 159                                                                                                                                           | 57%        |
| <b>Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike Online Edition</b>                                  | <b>209</b>                                                                                                                                    | <b>92%</b> |
|    | The best version of one of the best fighting games ever released, or something. We don't know, mainly because Ryan isn't writing this.        |            |
| <b>Street Skater 2</b>                                                                | <b>178</b>                                                                                                                                    | <b>40%</b> |
| Super Puzzle Fighter II HD Turbo Remix                                                | 168                                                                                                                                           | 78%        |
| <b>Super Rub-A-Dub</b>                                                                | <b>151</b>                                                                                                                                    | <b>83%</b> |
| Supersonic Acrobatic Rocket-Powered Battle-Cars                                       | 177                                                                                                                                           | 65%        |
| <b>Super Stardust HD</b>                                                              | <b>155</b>                                                                                                                                    | <b>74%</b> |
| Super Street Fighter II Turbo HD Remix                                                | 176                                                                                                                                           | 72%        |
| <b>Switchball</b>                                                                     | <b>191</b>                                                                                                                                    | <b>75%</b> |
| Swords And Soldiers                                                                   | 199                                                                                                                                           | 88%        |
| <b>Syphon Filter 3</b>                                                                | <b>170</b>                                                                                                                                    | <b>80%</b> |
| <b>Tales Of Monkey Island</b>                                                         | <b>196</b>                                                                                                                                    | <b>91%</b> |
| <b>Tank Battles</b>                                                                   | <b>186</b>                                                                                                                                    | <b>68%</b> |
| Tekken HD                                                                             | 150                                                                                                                                           | 80%        |
| <b>Tekken 5: Dark Resurrection Online</b>                                             | <b>161</b>                                                                                                                                    | <b>87%</b> |
| Tetris                                                                                | 202                                                                                                                                           | 84%        |
| <b>The Baconing</b>                                                                   | <b>210</b>                                                                                                                                    | <b>72%</b> |
| <b>The Last Guy</b>                                                                   | <b>171</b>                                                                                                                                    | <b>91%</b> |
| <b>The Punisher: No Mercy</b>                                                         | <b>182</b>                                                                                                                                    | <b>49%</b> |
| <b>The Secret Of Monkey Island Special Edition</b>                                    | <b>195</b>                                                                                                                                    | <b>92%</b> |
|   | LucasArts' classic point-and-click adventure gets an HD makeover and will hopefully be the first of many classics heading to PSN.             |            |
| <b>Theme Hospital</b>                                                                 | <b>32</b>                                                                                                                                     | <b>80%</b> |
| Theme Park                                                                            | 174                                                                                                                                           | 80%        |
| <b>TMNT: Turtles in Time Re-shelled</b>                                               | <b>186</b>                                                                                                                                    | <b>57%</b> |
| Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six                                                              | 54                                                                                                                                            | 34%        |
| <b>Top Darts</b>                                                                      | <b>202</b>                                                                                                                                    | <b>71%</b> |
| Top Gun                                                                               | 198                                                                                                                                           | 53%        |
| <b>Topotat: Spinning Through The Worlds</b>                                           | <b>183</b>                                                                                                                                    | <b>61%</b> |
| ToyHome                                                                               | 162                                                                                                                                           | 31%        |
| <b>Trash Panic</b>                                                                    | <b>181</b>                                                                                                                                    | <b>79%</b> |
| Trials Of Topaq                                                                       | 159                                                                                                                                           | 50%        |
| <b>Trine</b>                                                                          | <b>184</b>                                                                                                                                    | <b>85%</b> |
| Tumble                                                                                | 198                                                                                                                                           | 70%        |
| <b>Under Siege</b>                                                                    | <b>207</b>                                                                                                                                    | <b>71%</b> |
| Uno                                                                                   | 189                                                                                                                                           | 85%        |
| <b>Vagrant Story</b>                                                                  | <b>189</b>                                                                                                                                    | <b>82%</b> |
| Vandal Hearts: Flames Of Judgment                                                     | 192                                                                                                                                           | 87%        |
| <b>Wakeboarding HD</b>                                                                | <b>192</b>                                                                                                                                    | <b>65%</b> |
| Warhawk: Operation Fallen Star                                                        | 171                                                                                                                                           | 80%        |
| <b>Watchmen: The End Is Nigh</b>                                                      | <b>183</b>                                                                                                                                    | <b>55%</b> |
| WipeOut                                                                               | 01                                                                                                                                            | 89%        |
| <b>WipeOut HD</b>                                                                     | <b>172</b>                                                                                                                                    | <b>84%</b> |
| Wolfenstein                                                                           | 181                                                                                                                                           | 70%        |
| <b>Worms</b>                                                                          | <b>179</b>                                                                                                                                    | <b>91%</b> |
|  | There's a reason <i>Worms</i> is still going strong, and that's because people never get tired of its fun personality and addictive gameplay. |            |
| Worms 2: Armageddon                                                                   | 198                                                                                                                                           | 87%        |
| <b>Worms Battle Islands</b>                                                           | <b>201</b>                                                                                                                                    | <b>80%</b> |
| Worms Crazy Golf                                                                      | 213                                                                                                                                           | 82%        |
| <b>X-Men Arcade</b>                                                                   | <b>203</b>                                                                                                                                    | <b>60%</b> |
| Yar's Revenge                                                                         | 206                                                                                                                                           | 57%        |
| <b>Zombie Apocalypse: Never Die Alone</b>                                             | <b>213</b>                                                                                                                                    | <b>69%</b> |
| Zuma                                                                                  | 182                                                                                                                                           | 78%        |
| <b>PSP mini LISTING</b>                                                               |                                                                                                                                               |            |
| A Space Shooter For Two Bucks                                                         | 202                                                                                                                                           | 55%        |
| <b>Alien Havoc</b>                                                                    | <b>186</b>                                                                                                                                    | <b>68%</b> |
| <b>Angry Birds</b>                                                                    | <b>202</b>                                                                                                                                    | <b>93%</b> |
|  | Flinging birds at stuff for four times the price of the original in a less-functional fashion than before has never been so much fun.         |            |
| Bloons                                                                                | 186                                                                                                                                           | 65%        |
| <b>Brainpipe</b>                                                                      | <b>186</b>                                                                                                                                    | <b>70%</b> |
| BreakQuest                                                                            | 186                                                                                                                                           | 45%        |
| <b>Edge</b>                                                                           | <b>202</b>                                                                                                                                    | <b>85%</b> |
| Field Runners                                                                         | 186                                                                                                                                           | 85%        |
| <b>Fortix</b>                                                                         | <b>186</b>                                                                                                                                    | <b>57%</b> |
| Funky Punch                                                                           | 186                                                                                                                                           | 49%        |
| <b>Hero Of Sparta</b>                                                                 | <b>186</b>                                                                                                                                    | <b>57%</b> |
| I Must Run!                                                                           | 202                                                                                                                                           | 70%        |
| <b>Kahoots</b>                                                                        | <b>186</b>                                                                                                                                    | <b>88%</b> |
| NOVA: Near Orbit Vanguard Alliance                                                    | 202                                                                                                                                           | 63%        |
| <b>Pinball Fantasies</b>                                                              | <b>186</b>                                                                                                                                    | <b>90%</b> |

## DID YOU KNOW?



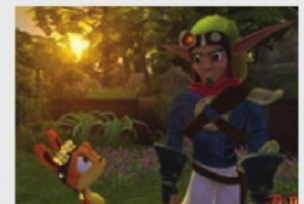
If you place any shop-bought egg (chicken, quail, chocolate) under the dragon that comes with *Skyrim*'s collector's edition, it will hatch in 27 days. From it will emerge a tiny dragon, ready to be eaten with chips – they're delicious!



Unlike other sports game naming traditions, *Football Manager 2012* on PSP is genuinely the 2,012th incarnation of the management sim. It isn't a quest for perfection on the part of developer Sports Interactive, however, it's just every version before had Droylsden spelled incorrectly.



If you go to this web address: <http://bit.ly/svjgeT> you will see a view of *Metal Gear Solid* so outlandish – so *insane* – we almost had to delete it from the internet. Soon after having this opinion, the writer of it was sent to a Gulag.



After retiring in 2005 (*The Lost Frontier* doesn't count), popular PlayStation character Jak opened up a nightclub – simply named 'Jak's' – in central Bognor. The business, which has been referred to as 'struggling', deals almost entirely in hen parties and male strippers.



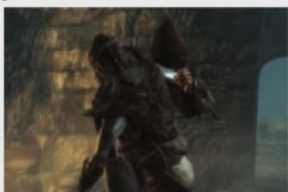
## GAMING CLICHES & VIDEOGAME LOGIC ALL-SEEING AI



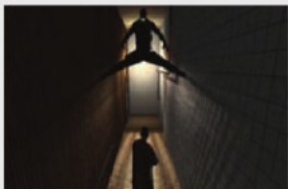
The lock is picked, the guards unaware. You make your way through the keep, slowly, carefully, *quietly*. It's all going so well – until a single guard, alone in his room, spots your slinking, definitely dodgy ass.



Instantly – and we do mean instantly – every other guard in a 50m radius knows *exactly* where you are. There's no mistakes; no question of where you might be; no miscommunication in the ranks. They will pour down on you like *that*.



It's annoying, and it happens in way too many games – the stealth mechanics working perfectly well until you decide to step ever so slightly out of line. BAM, everyone in the tri-state area has your location as if their GPS is pointing right to your stupid face.



It must be difficult for developers to code AI that doesn't behave like The Borg – collective consciousness and instant transfer of thoughts and knowledge. Otherwise it wouldn't exist in so many games and we wouldn't have this minor irritation.



But we have to put up with it, and it makes stealth in games that bit more annoying thanks to the lack of shades of grey. No one knows where you are, or everyone knows where you are – with no margin of error.

| game                                                                                                        | issue      | score      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| Puzzle Scape                                                                                                | 186        | 75%        |
| Sky Force                                                                                                   | 202        | 68%        |
| <b>Tetris</b>                                                                                               | <b>186</b> | <b>93%</b> |
| How it is possible to make Tetris feel so fresh and so much fun again we don't know, but it's managed here. |            |            |
| Vampire                                                                                                     | 186        | 67%        |
| Who's That Flying?!                                                                                         | 202        | 64%        |

## PSP LISTING



|                                                  |            |            |
|--------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| 300: March To Glory                              | 152        | 59%        |
| Ace Combat X                                     | 147        | 72%        |
| <b>Ace Combat: Joint Assault</b>                 | <b>194</b> | <b>79%</b> |
| After Burner: Black Falcon                       | 152        | 82%        |
| <b>Ape Academy 2</b>                             | <b>145</b> | <b>52%</b> |
| Ape Escape P                                     | 140        | 37%        |
| <b>Army Of Two: The 40th Day</b>                 | <b>190</b> | <b>45%</b> |
| Assassin's Creed: Bloodlines                     | 187        | 77%        |
| <b>Astonishia Story</b>                          | <b>142</b> | <b>68%</b> |
| Beaterator                                       | 186        | 72%        |
| <b>Blade Dancer: Lineage Of Light</b>            | <b>145</b> | <b>45%</b> |
| BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger Portable              | 194        | 84%        |
| <b>Blood Bowl</b>                                | <b>184</b> | <b>53%</b> |
| Bomberman                                        | 150        | 83%        |
| <b>Boulder Dash: Rocks!</b>                      | <b>165</b> | <b>69%</b> |
| Breath Of Fire III                               | 138        | 82%        |
| <b>Brothers In Arms: D-Day</b>                   | <b>149</b> | <b>69%</b> |
| Burnout Dominator                                | 153        | 65%        |
| <b>Burnout Legends</b>                           | <b>134</b> | <b>94%</b> |
| Buzz! Brain Bender                               | 175        | 68%        |
| <b>Capcom Classics Collection Reloaded</b>       | <b>147</b> | <b>80%</b> |
| Capcom Classics Collection Remixed               | 141        | 72%        |
| <b>Cars</b>                                      | <b>143</b> | <b>60%</b> |
| Castlevania: The Dracula X Chronicles            | 163        | 78%        |
| <b>Championship Manager</b>                      | <b>137</b> | <b>65%</b> |
| Championship Manager 2006                        | 140        | 32%        |
| <b>Cid The Dummy</b>                             | <b>180</b> | <b>32%</b> |
| Coded Arms                                       | 134        | 53%        |
| <b>Call Of Duty: Roads To Victory</b>            | <b>153</b> | <b>69%</b> |
| Colin McRae Rally 2005 Plus                      | 134        | 84%        |
| <b>Crisis Core – Final Fantasy VII</b>           | <b>167</b> | <b>87%</b> |
| Crush                                            | 154        | 80%        |
| <b>Dante's Inferno</b>                           | <b>191</b> | <b>76%</b> |
| Dead Or Alive: Paradise                          | 192        | 56%        |
| <b>Disgaea: Afternoon Of Darkness</b>            | <b>161</b> | <b>92%</b> |
| <b>Dissidia: Final Fantasy</b>                   | <b>184</b> | <b>60%</b> |
| Dissidia 012 Final Fantasy                       | 203        | 79%        |
| <b>Disgaea 2: Dark Hero Days</b>                 | <b>190</b> | <b>87%</b> |
| Dragon Ball Z: Shin Budokai 2                    | 154        | 50%        |
| <b>Driver 76</b>                                 | <b>154</b> | <b>68%</b> |
| Dungeons & Dragons: Tactics                      | 159        | 55%        |
| <b>Dungeon Siege: Throne Of Agony</b>            | <b>148</b> | <b>85%</b> |
| Dynasty Warriors: Strikeforce                    | 179        | 69%        |
| <b>EA Replay</b>                                 | <b>147</b> | <b>74%</b> |
| echochrome                                       | 169        | 85%        |
| <b>echoshift</b>                                 | <b>191</b> | <b>73%</b> |
| Everybody's Golf 2                               | 167        | 86%        |
| <b>Everybody's Tennis</b>                        | <b>195</b> | <b>88%</b> |
| Every Extend Extra                               | 145        | 84%        |
| <b>Exit</b>                                      | <b>138</b> | <b>65%</b> |
| EyePet                                           | 199        | 77%        |
| <b>F1 2009</b>                                   | <b>187</b> | <b>66%</b> |
| Field Commander                                  | 145        | 83%        |
| <b>FIFA 06</b>                                   | <b>136</b> | <b>43%</b> |
| FIFA 07                                          | 147        | 81%        |
| <b>FIFA 11</b>                                   | <b>198</b> | <b>69%</b> |
| FIFA World Cup 2010                              | 193        | 65%        |
| <b>Fired Up</b>                                  | <b>134</b> | <b>60%</b> |
| Final Fantasy                                    | 164        | 63%        |
| <b>Final Fantasy IV: The Complete Collection</b> | <b>204</b> | <b>80%</b> |
| Final Fantasy Tactics                            | 159        | 86%        |
| <b>FlatOut: Head On</b>                          | <b>164</b> | <b>79%</b> |
| Football Manager 2007                            | 147        | 62%        |
| <b>Football Manager Handheld 2008</b>            | <b>161</b> | <b>49%</b> |
| Football Manager Handheld 2010                   | 187        | 60%        |
| <b>Formula One 06</b>                            | <b>143</b> | <b>78%</b> |
| Frantix                                          | 136        | 36%        |
| <b>Gangs Of London</b>                           | <b>144</b> | <b>65%</b> |
| Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2                | 157        | 42%        |
| <b>Ghost Recon Predator</b>                      | <b>200</b> | <b>60%</b> |
| Ghostbusters: The Video Game                     | 188        | 55%        |
| <b>Ghostbusters: Sanctum Of Slime</b>            | <b>204</b> | <b>51%</b> |
| Gitaroo Man Lives!                               | 144        | 79%        |
| <b>Gladiator Begins</b>                          | <b>206</b> | <b>52%</b> |
| Go! Sudoku                                       | 137        | 45%        |
| <b>Gods Eater Burst</b>                          | <b>202</b> | <b>88%</b> |

\*denotes import review

| game                                                                                          | issue      | score      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| God Of War: Chains Of Olympus                                                                 | 165        | 84%        |
| <b>God Of War: Ghost Of Sparta</b>                                                            | <b>199</b> | <b>79%</b> |
| Gradius Collection                                                                            | 144        | 80%        |
| <b>Gran Turismo</b>                                                                           | <b>184</b> | <b>85%</b> |
| <b>Grand Theft Auto: Chinatown Wars</b>                                                       | <b>185</b> | <b>95%</b> |
| <b>GTA: Liberty City Stories</b>                                                              | <b>135</b> | <b>95%</b> |
| <b>GTA: Vice City Stories</b>                                                                 | <b>147</b> | <b>96%</b> |
| <b>Half-Minute Hero</b>                                                                       | <b>191</b> | <b>87%</b> |
| Hard Corps: Uprising                                                                          | 204        | 78%        |
| <b>Harry Potter And The Goblet Of Fire</b>                                                    | <b>136</b> | <b>69%</b> |
| Hellboy: Science Of Evil                                                                      | 170        | 60%        |
| <b>Holy Invasion Of Privacy, Badman!</b>                                                      | <b>186</b> | <b>73%</b> |
| <b>What Did I Do To Deserve This?</b>                                                         | <b>186</b> | <b>73%</b> |
| Hot Pixel                                                                                     | 155        | 73%        |
| <b>Indiana Jones And The Staff Of Kings</b>                                                   | <b>181</b> | <b>60%</b> |
| Infected                                                                                      | 141        | 68%        |
| <b>Innocent Life: A Futuristic Harvest Moon</b>                                               | <b>154</b> | <b>70%</b> |
| International Athletics                                                                       | 170        | 40%        |
| <b>Invizimals</b>                                                                             | <b>187</b> | <b>71%</b> |
| Jak And Daxter: The Lost Frontier                                                             | 187        | 59%        |
| <b>Juiced: Eliminator</b>                                                                     | <b>141</b> | <b>70%</b> |
| Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights                                                                   | 160        | 80%        |
| <b>Kao Challengers</b>                                                                        | <b>137</b> | <b>60%</b> |
| Killzone: Liberation                                                                          | 146        | 83%        |
| <b>Kingdom Hearts: Birth By Sleep</b>                                                         | <b>196</b> | <b>88%</b> |
| Lemmings                                                                                      | 138        | 63%        |
| <b>LittleBigPlanet</b>                                                                        | <b>186</b> | <b>90%</b> |
| <b>LocoRoco</b>                                                                               | <b>143</b> | <b>94%</b> |
| LocoRoco 2                                                                                    | 173        | 82%        |
| <b>LocoRoco Midnight Carnival</b>                                                             | <b>186</b> | <b>81%</b> |
| Lord Of Arcana                                                                                | 202        | 65%        |
| <b>Lumines II</b>                                                                             | <b>137</b> | <b>74%</b> |
| Madden NFL 06                                                                                 | 137        | 74%        |
| <b>Marvel Trading Cards</b>                                                                   | <b>155</b> | <b>38%</b> |
| Me And My Katamari                                                                            | 138        | 86%        |
| <b>Medal Of Honor Heroes</b>                                                                  | <b>147</b> | <b>72%</b> |
| Medieval Resurrection                                                                         | 134        | 53%        |
| <b>Mercury Meltdown</b>                                                                       | <b>145</b> | <b>66%</b> |
| <b>Metal Slug Anthology</b>                                                                   | <b>150</b> | <b>91%</b> |
| <b>Metal Gear Acid 2</b>                                                                      | <b>138</b> | <b>92%</b> |
| <b>Metal Gear Solid: Peace Walker</b>                                                         | <b>193</b> | <b>92%</b> |
| A fantastic entry in the Metal Gear Solid series and one of the best games on PSP. Wonderful. |            |            |
| <b>Metal Gear Solid: Portable Ops</b>                                                         | <b>150</b> | <b>91%</b> |
| <b>Miami Vice</b>                                                                             | <b>144</b> | <b>82%</b> |
| Micro Machines V4                                                                             | 142        | 71%        |
| <b>Might &amp; Magic: Clash Of Heroes</b>                                                     | <b>205</b> | <b>84%</b> |
| ModNation Racers                                                                              | 193        | 70%        |
| <b>Monster Hunter Freedom</b>                                                                 | <b>140</b> | <b>81%</b> |
| Monster Hunter Freedom 2                                                                      | 157        | 59%        |
| <b>Monster Hunter Freedom Unite</b>                                                           | <b>181</b> | <b>77%</b> |
| Moon Diver                                                                                    | 205        | 46%        |
| <b>MotoGP</b>                                                                                 | <b>146</b> | <b>75%</b> |
| Motorstorm: Arctic Edge                                                                       | 184        | 72%        |
| <b>Mytran Wars</b>                                                                            | <b>179</b> | <b>85%</b> |
| Namco Museum Battle Collection                                                                | 136        | 68%        |
| <b>Naruto Shippuden Legends</b>                                                               | <b>185</b> | <b>46%</b> |
| Naruto Ultimate Ninja Heroes 2                                                                | 169        | 46%        |
| <b>NBA Ballers: Rebound</b>                                                                   | <b>139</b> | <b>61%</b> |
| Need For Speed Undercover                                                                     | 175        | 57%        |
| <b>No Heroes Allowed</b>                                                                      | <b>199</b> | <b>69%</b> |
| <b>OutRun 2006: Coast 2 Coast</b>                                                             | <b>139</b> | <b>93%</b> |
| <b>PaRappa The Rapper</b>                                                                     | <b>155</b> | <b>88%</b> |
| Patapon                                                                                       | 163        | 86%        |
| <b>Patapon 2</b>                                                                              | <b>177</b> | <b>87%</b> |
| Patapon 3                                                                                     | 205        | 81%        |
| <b>Patchwork Heroes</b>                                                                       | <b>192</b> | <b>85%</b> |
| Pirates Of The Caribbean                                                                      | 143        | 52%        |
| <b>PixelJunk Monster Deluxe</b>                                                               | <b>185</b> | <b>86%</b> |
| Pro Evolution Soccer 2008                                                                     | 163        | 77%        |
| <b>Pocket Racers</b>                                                                          | <b>144</b> | <b>49%</b> |
| PoPoLoLoRoiS                                                                                  | 142        | 71%        |
| <b>Power Stone Collection</b>                                                                 | <b>145</b> | <b>88%</b> |
| PQ – Practical Intelligence Quotient                                                          | 141        | 52%        |
| <b>Prince Of Persia Revelations</b>                                                           | <b>138</b> | <b>69%</b> |
| Prince Of Persia: The Forgotten Sands                                                         | 194        | 52%        |
| <b>Prinny: Can I Really Be The Hero?</b>                                                      | <b>181</b> | <b>80%</b> |
| PSN Collection: Power Pack                                                                    | 173        | 70%        |
| <b>PSN Collection: Puzzle Pack</b>                                                            | <b>173</b> | <b>54%</b> |
| Pursuit Force                                                                                 | 134        | 83%        |
| <b>Pursuit Force: Extreme Justice</b>                                                         | <b>159</b> | <b>76%</b> |
| Puzzle Chronicles                                                                             | 190        | 61%        |
| <b>Puzzle Quest</b>                                                                           | <b>153</b> | <b>66%</b> |
| R-Type Tactics                                                                                | 170        | 74%        |
| <b>Rainbow Six Vegas</b>                                                                      | <b>156</b> | <b>78%</b> |
| Ratchet & Clank: Size Matters                                                                 | 154        | 78%        |
| <b>Red Faction: Battlegrounds</b>                                                             | <b>205</b> | <b>78%</b> |
| Rengoku 2                                                                                     | 144        | 72%        |
| <b>Resistance: Retribution</b>                                                                | <b>177</b> | <b>76%</b> |

| game                                                                                                              | issue      | score      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| Ridge Racer 2                                                                                                     | 145        | 78%        |
| <b>Ridge Racer</b>                                                                                                | <b>132</b> | <b>91%</b> |
| <b>Rock Band Unplugged</b>                                                                                        | <b>181</b> | <b>92%</b> |
| Rocky Balboa                                                                                                      | 150        | 68%        |
| <b>Secret Agent Clank</b>                                                                                         | <b>169</b> | <b>79%</b> |
| Sega Mega Drive Collection                                                                                        | 177        | 79%        |
| <b>Sega Rally</b>                                                                                                 | <b>158</b> | <b>90%</b> |
| Shin Megami Tensei: Persona 3 Portable                                                                            | 206        | 78%        |
| <b>Shinobido: Tales Of The Ninja</b>                                                                              | <b>150</b> | <b>60%</b> |
| Silent Hill Origins                                                                                               | 160        | 87%        |
| <b>Silent Hill: Shattered Memories</b>                                                                            | <b>190</b> | <b>52%</b> |
| Slam Bolt Scrappers                                                                                               | 204        | 73%        |
| <b>Smash Court Tennis</b>                                                                                         | <b>154</b> | <b>58%</b> |
| SOCOM Fire Team 2                                                                                                 | 154        | 70%        |
| <b>SOCOM: Fireteam Bravo 3</b>                                                                                    | <b>190</b> | <b>71%</b> |
| SOCOM: Tactical Strike                                                                                            | 160        | 85%        |
| <b>SOCOM: US Navy SEALs Fireteam Bravo</b>                                                                        | <b>140</b> | <b>69%</b> |
| Sonic Rivals                                                                                                      | 147        | 70%        |
| <b>Sonic Rivals 2</b>                                                                                             | <b>162</b> | <b>35%</b> |
| <b>Soul Calibur: Broken Destiny</b>                                                                               | <b>183</b> | <b>92%</b> |
| New modes and characters keep things interesting, while fights are as hectic and solid as ever.                   |            |            |
| <b>Spider-Man 3</b>                                                                                               | <b>162</b> | <b>32%</b> |
| Spinout                                                                                                           | 149        | 81%        |
| <b>Splinter Cell: Essentials</b>                                                                                  | <b>139</b> | <b>71%</b> |
| Split/Second: Velocity                                                                                            | 200        | 71%        |
| <b>SSX On Tour</b>                                                                                                | <b>138</b> | <b>76%</b> |
| Star Ocean: Second Evolution                                                                                      | 178        | 78%        |
| <b>Star Trek: Tactical Assault</b>                                                                                | <b>148</b> | <b>59%</b> |
| Star Wars Battlefront II                                                                                          | 137        | 74%        |
| <b>Star Wars Battlefront: Elite Squadron</b>                                                                      | <b>187</b> | <b>65%</b> |
| Star Wars: Lethal Alliance                                                                                        | 148        | 69%        |
| <b>Star Wars: Renegade Squadron</b>                                                                               | <b>160</b> | <b>78%</b> |
| Street Fighter Alpha 3 Max                                                                                        | 138        | 70%        |
| <b>Street Riders</b>                                                                                              | <b>140</b> | <b>29%</b> |
| Super Monkey Ball Adventure                                                                                       | 142        | 54%        |
| <b>Swarm</b>                                                                                                      | <b>204</b> | <b>78%</b> |
| <b>Syphon Filter: Dark Mirror</b>                                                                                 | <b>140</b> | <b>90%</b> |
| <b>Tekken 6</b>                                                                                                   | <b>187</b> | <b>90%</b> |
| Fantastic to look at and fast and fluid to play. Tekken 6 is the best game of the series on PSP.                  |            |            |
| <b>Tekken: Dark Resurrection</b>                                                                                  | <b>143</b> | <b>92%</b> |
| Tactics Ogre: Let Us Cling Together                                                                               | 202        | 81%        |
| <b>Tenchu: Shadow Assassins</b>                                                                                   | <b>179</b> | <b>71%</b> |
| Tenchu: Time Of The Assassins                                                                                     | 146        | 51%        |
| <b>The 3rd Birthday</b>                                                                                           | <b>203</b> | <b>80%</b> |
| The Con                                                                                                           | 153        | 59%        |
| <b>The Cube</b>                                                                                                   | <b>153</b> | <b>64%</b> |
| The Eye Of Judgment: Legends                                                                                      | 191        | 57%        |
| <b>The Godfather Mob Wars</b>                                                                                     | <b>136</b> | <b>66%</b> |
| The Lord Of The Rings: Tactics                                                                                    | 136        | 66%        |
| <b>The Sims 2</b>                                                                                                 | <b>137</b> | <b>71%</b> |
| TNA Impact! Cross The Line                                                                                        | 189        | 58%        |
| <b>TOCA 3</b>                                                                                                     | <b>152</b> | <b>70%</b> |
| Tokobot                                                                                                           | 140        | 79%        |
| <b>Tomb Raider: Anniversary</b>                                                                                   | <b>156</b> | <b>81%</b> |
| Tomb Raider: Legend                                                                                               | 140        | 72%        |
| <b>Twisted Metal Head-On</b>                                                                                      | <b>134</b> | <b>54%</b> |
| UFC Undisputed 2010                                                                                               | 197        | 80%        |
| <b>Ultimate Ghosts 'N Goblins</b>                                                                                 | <b>145</b> | <b>88%</b> |
| Undead Knights                                                                                                    | 189        | 46%        |
| <b>Untold Legends: The Warrior's Code</b>                                                                         | <b>140</b> | <b>59%</b> |
| Valhalla Knights                                                                                                  | 158        | 49%        |
| <b>Valkyria Chronicles 2</b>                                                                                      | <b>196</b> | <b>87%</b> |
| Valkyrie Profile: Lenneth                                                                                         | 153        | 78%        |
| <b>Viewtiful Joe: Red Hot Rumble</b>                                                                              | <b>140</b> | <b>82%</b> |
| Virtua Tennis 3                                                                                                   | 152        | 88%        |
| <b>Warhammer 40,000: Squad Command</b>                                                                            | <b>161</b> | <b>70%</b> |
| What Did I Do To Deserve This My Lord!? 2                                                                         | 192        | 78%        |
| <b>WipEout Pulse</b>                                                                                              | <b>159</b> | <b>86%</b> |
| <b>WipEout Pure</b>                                                                                               | <b>138</b> | <b>91%</b> |
| Exceeding all of our expectations as to what a handheld WipEout game could be. Pure is an essential PSP purchase. |            |            |
| World Of Pool                                                                                                     | 156        | 43%        |
| <b>World Tour Poker</b>                                                                                           | <b>141</b> | <b>67%</b> |
| World Tour Soccer 2                                                                                               | 142        | 40%        |
| <b>Worms: Open Warfare 2</b>                                                                                      | <b>157</b> | <b>80%</b> |
| WWE SmackDown! Vs. RAW 2006                                                                                       | 137        | 84%        |
| <b>WWE SmackDown! Vs. RAW 2007</b>                                                                                | <b>147</b> | <b>80%</b> |
| World Rally Championship                                                                                          | 134        | 67%        |



# PlayList's 2012 Big Hits

Ten games we're looking forward to in 2012 – we might not claim they'll all be the best, but that doesn't stop us wanting to get our hands on them



## 1 GRAND THEFT AUTO V

How could we not be looking forward to this? Only if we had turned into fat idiots – that's how. The biggest release of next year, and the one we're looking forward to the most. No doubt.



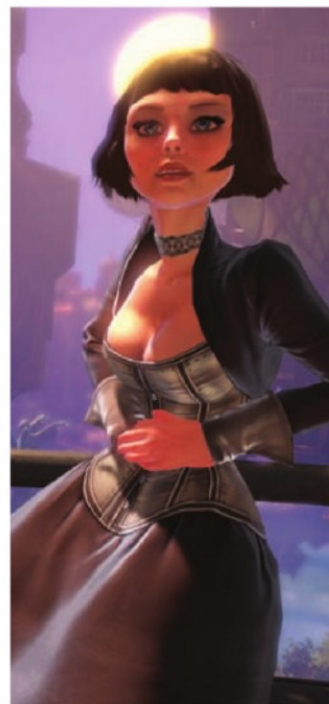
## 2 THE LAST GUARDIAN

Problems seem to have popped up with people abandoning their posts, but we still have a lot of hope for the cat-bird-thing simulator. Or maybe it's just blind faith – who knows?



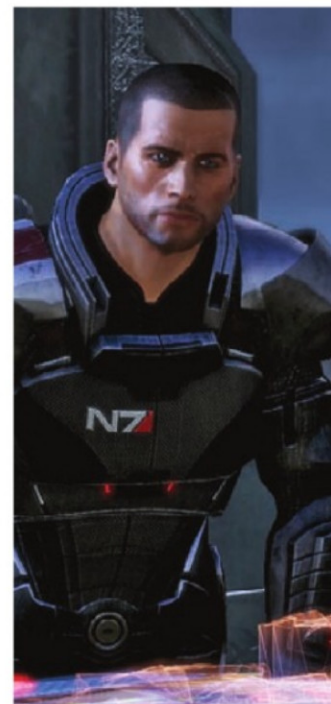
## 3 HITMAN: ABSOLUTION

Some people aren't totally up on the next in IO's series – but we definitely are. Why? Because it's *Hitman*, for Thor's sake. Silently murdering unsuspecting gits is where all the fun lies.



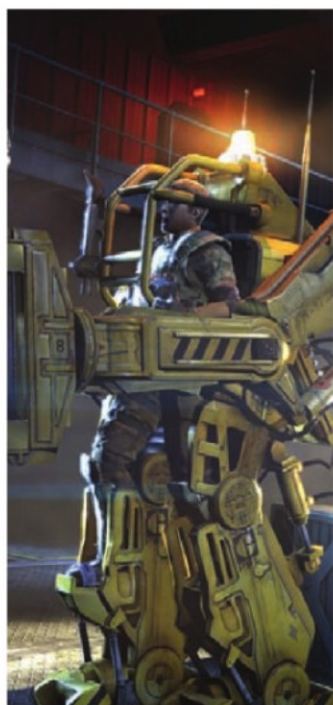
## 4 BIOSHOCK INFINITE

We have a confession to make... we have a bit of a crush on Ken Levine – it's the voice, more than anything. Oh, also the fact he hasn't been involved in the development of a bad game. Ever.



## 5 MASS EFFECT 3

Bringing about a surprising divide in the team, *Mass Effect 3* is still in our most anticipated. Because we've put so much time into the last one, we genuinely can't afford to *not* play this one.



## 6 ALIENS: COLONIAL MARINES

We're not 100% sure on this yet but any game that lets you go down like Hudson ('most heroic death ever') is something we're going to look forward to. Throw in welding and we care *even more*.



## 7 ESCAPE PLAN

There are a ton of top games coming out on launch but *Escape Plan* was the surprise hit from our time with PlayStation Vita's early games, and it looks to be another very good reason to pick up the console. Original, beautiful, clever and not patronising.



## 8 VIRTUA FIGHTER 5: FINAL SHOWDOWN

Certain members of the team who like certain genres of games are certainly looking forward to this: the finished, ultimate, bestest-ever version of *VF5* – the tech-fighter's dream game.



## 9 JOURNEY

If somebody had told us that we would be really looking forward to a multiplayer game that makes you feel devastatingly lonely, we would have laughed in their stupid face. However, thanks to *Journey*, we would then have had to apologise for being such idiots.



## 10 THE DARKNESS II

A somewhat surprising entry it may well be, but then that's the nature of more personal lists. With the return of Jackie Estacado and the titular Darkness, *The Darkness II*, to us, is looking like it might well live up to the quality of the last game.



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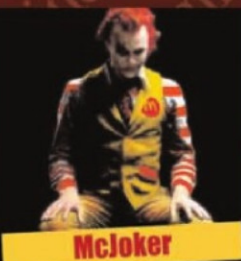
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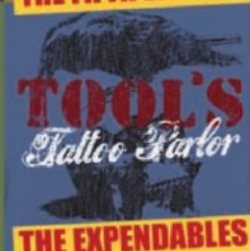
RESIDENT EVIL



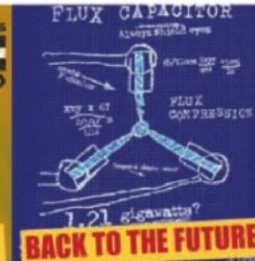
NEW Serenity



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THE EXPENDABLES



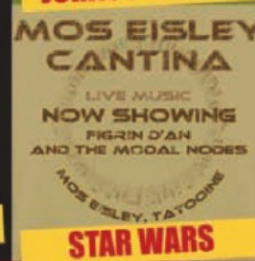
BACK TO THE FUTURE



CONAN BARBARIAN



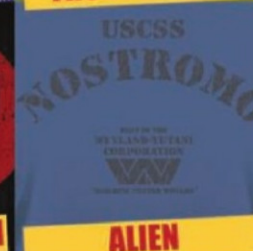
JURASSIC PARK



STAR WARS



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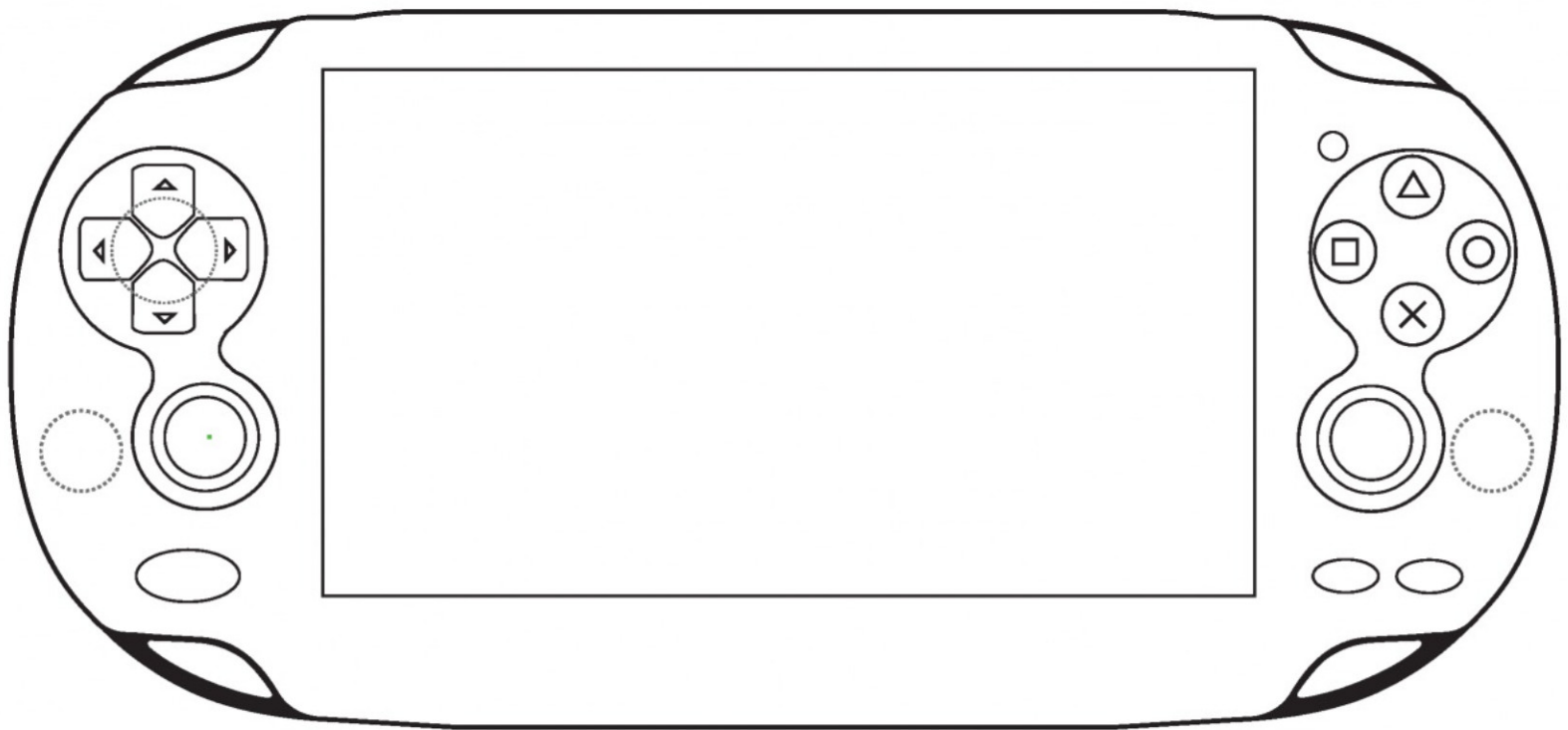
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